Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ

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藤島康介

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ああっ女神さまっ

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DARK HORSE MANGA™

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SORRY, TAMIYA WAS SUDDENLY CALLED INTO WORK TONIGHT...
HE SAID TO TELL YOU HE'D MAKE IT UP TO YOU LATER.
A LOT OF PEOPLE SPEND THEIR SATURDAY NIGHTS WITH HER...
YEAH, OKAY, I'LL TELL HIM.
THIS SUCKS...
JEEZ...I WISH HE'D GET HIMSELF A DAMN ANSWERING MACHINE!
BYE-- CLICK
"MAKE SURE...
...YA TAKE MUH PHONE CALLS, BOY!"
YEAH, RIGHT.
beep beep
HELLO! YOU'VE REACHED THE GODDESS TECHNICAL HELP LINE!
BRRINGG klik
UH, SORRY, WRONG NUM--
HE TOLD ME TO GIVE HIM A CALL IF HE GOT ANY MESSAGES...
OOPS...
beep

CHAPTER 1

The Number You Have Dialed Is Incorrect

WHAT IS YOUR DESIRE...?

GOOD EVENING!

WE'LL BE THERE IN JUST A MOMENT TO GRANT YOUR ACCESS REQUEST.

WHA-? HEY, WAIT, I--!

HELLO?
...BELL-DANDY.
W-WH-WHA...
OH, DEAR...
LIQUID PAPER
OOMPH...
FORGIVE ME FOR NOT INTRODUCING MYSELF. I AM THE GODDESS...

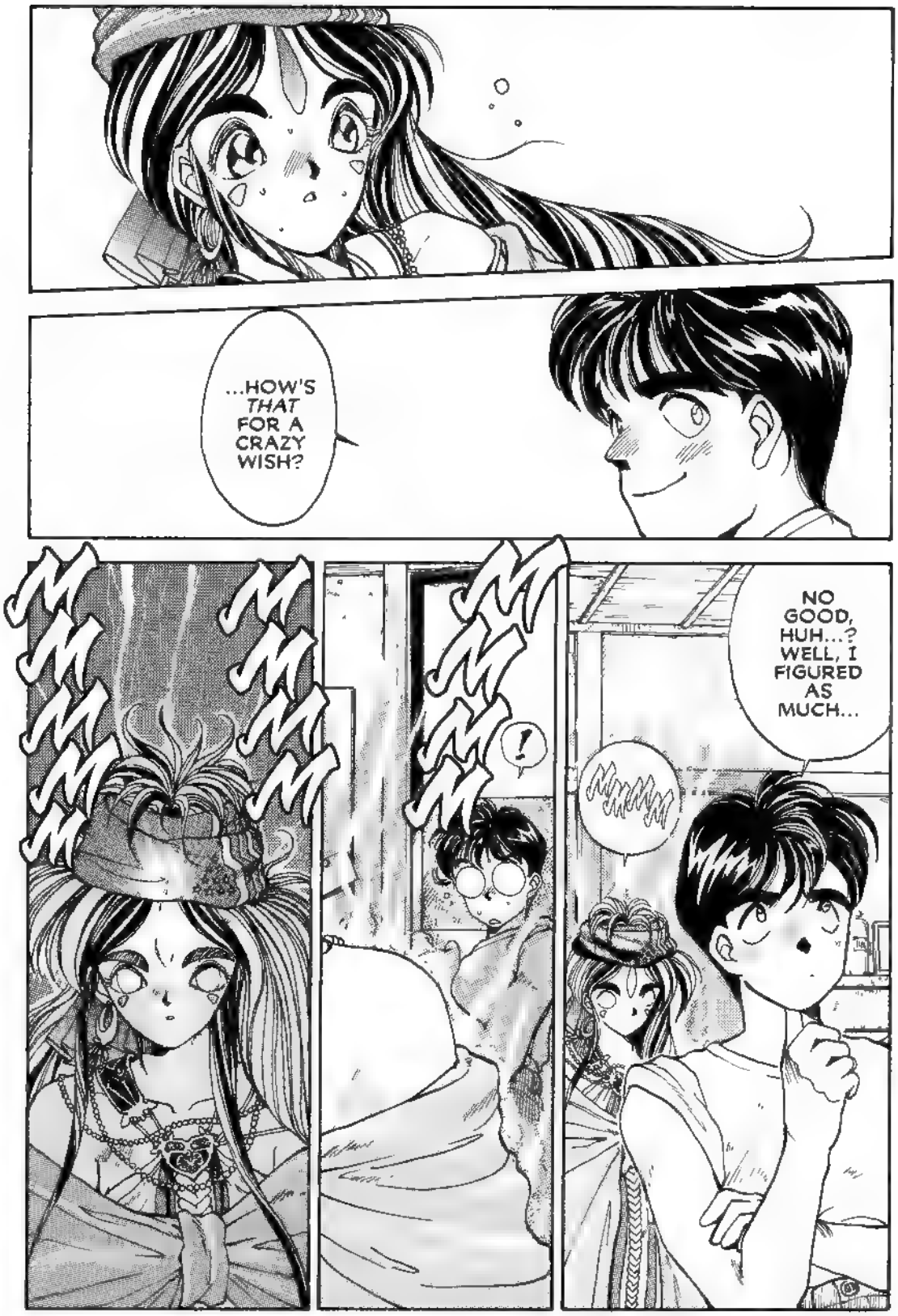
A GODDESS WITH A BUSINESS CARD?
H-HELP? UH, LIKE HOW...?
WE RECEIVED A SYSTEM ACCESS REQUEST FROM YOU BY TELEPHONE.
HERE'S MY CARD.
WE SPECIALIZE IN HELPING PEOPLE WITH PROBLEMS, LIKE YOU.
HOWEVER, I MUST WARN YOU THAT YOU ONLY GET ONE WISH.
BY GRANTING YOU A WISH.

A WISH?
FOR ANYTHING AT ALL?!
YES, OF COURSE.
IF YOU WANT TO BE A BILLIONAIRE...
...WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
IF YOU WANT TO DESTROY THE WORLD, WE CAN DO THAT, TOO...
...OF COURSE... WE PREFER TO AVOID DOING BUSINESS WITH THAT SORT OF CUSTOMER...

WHY DO YOU SAY YOU NEVER HAVE GOOD FORTUNE WITH WOMEN?
AM I DREAMING? NAH, THIS MUST BE SOME KINDA SETUP. IT'S THAT JERK TAMIYA AND HIS SICK BUDDIES.
SO GO AHEAD. ASK FOR ANYTHING YOU LIKE.
NO...
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
THEY SENT HER OVER FOR A LAUGH. 'CAUSE THEY KNOW I'M SUCH A LOSER WITH WOMEN.
AS A GODDESS, I AM INCAPABLE OF LYING.
BE-SIDES...
YOU'RE NOT DREAMING, AND IT'S NOT A JOKE!
!!

...
I'M TOO DAMN SHORT!
NOW SEE WHAT I MEAN?
NO...
CAN'T YOU TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT ME?
OKAY, STAND UP FOR A SECOND.
I'M SORRY... I STILL DON'T UNDER-STAND.
...JEEZ, ...SHE'S NOT KIDDING!
WHY WOULD THAT DEPRIVE YOU OF LUCK WITH WOMEN?

HAVE YOU DECIDED ON ONE?
OKAY-- I MIGHT AS WELL MAKE MY WISH.
sigh
MMM.
I WANT A GODDESS LIKE YOU...
...TO BE WITH ME ALWAYS!!


...HOW'S *THAT* FOR A CRAZY WISH?
!
NO GOOD, HUH...? WELL, I FIGURED AS MUCH...
MMM

KRAKOOM

H-
HANG
ON A
SEC!
YAAA!
VRMMVRMMVRMM
I WAS
JUST
KIDDING!

UHH...
SKRKK
WHOA!
OW.
OWW.
WOW... SHE'S SO LIGHT!

SORRY, I, UH...
!!
UM...
...OH!
uhh...
OH, NO!!
I NEED TO USE YOUR PHONE!!
WHA-?
YEAH...
S-SURE...

HELLO, THIS IS BELL-DANDY...
YES.
HUH WONDER WHO SHE'S CALLING?
beep
beep
beep
HOPE IT'S A COLLECT CALL
WHAT? YOU MEAN IT'S FINAL?
BUT... AL-MIGHTY ONE!
NO, IT'S ABOUT THAT LAST TRANS-FER...
CHING!
WELL, HONEST-LY!
THE ALMIGHTY SAID IT'S TOO LATE TO CHANGE IT.
THE WISH YOU MADE HAS ALREADY BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE SYSTEM.
UM... SOME-THING WRONG?

Y-YOU MEAN MY WISH FOR YOU TO ALWAYS BE HERE?!
WHADDAYA MEAN, ACCEPTED AND TOO LATE TO CHANGE IT?!
THAT'S RIGHT.
WELL... THAT'S NICE...
ALREADY ACCEPTED, HUH...
NOBODY CAN RESIST IT.
ONCE IT'S BEEN FILED AND ARCHIVED, A WISH ACQUIRES TREMENDOUS FORCE.
I'M AFRAID NOT.
THERE'S SOME WAY YOU CAN CANCEL IT, ISN'T THERE?
BUT... BUT THAT'S CRAZY!!
no can do!

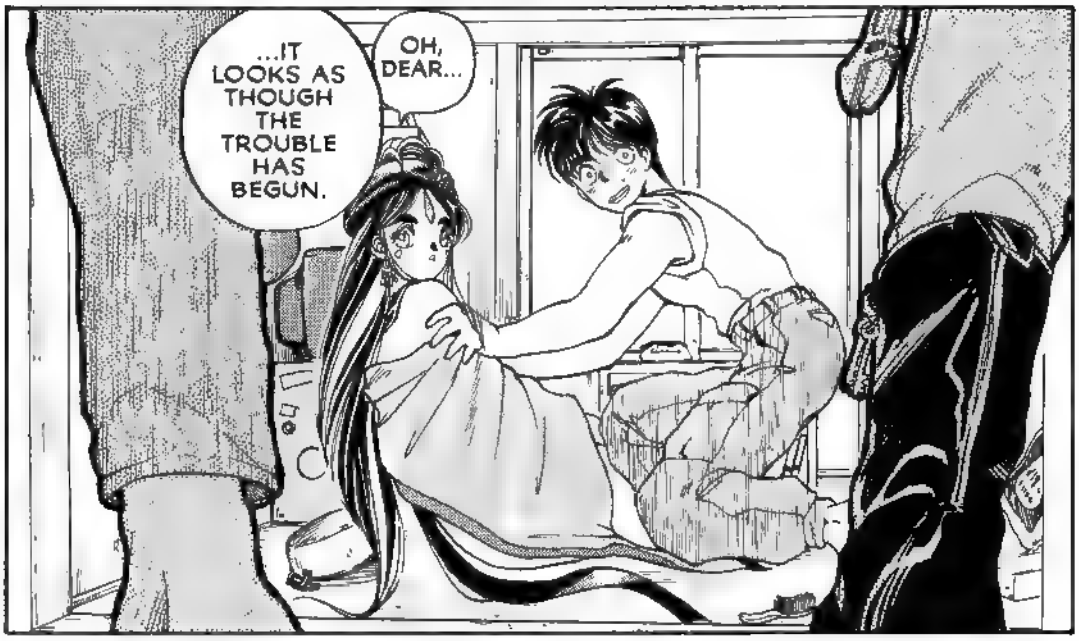
AND I HAVE VERY LITTLE POWER BY MYSELF
A TV SET CAN'T RECEIVE SIGNALS WITHOUT HELP CAN IT?
AND SOMETIMES IT EVEN HAS TO PASS THROUGH A SIGNAL BOOSTER BEFORE IT GETS TO THE SCREEN
THE ANTENNA PICKS UP THE SIGNAL
I'M JUST AN ANTENNA THAT'S ALL
ALL I DO IS TRANSFER WISHES TO THE ALMIGHTY
YOU MEAN

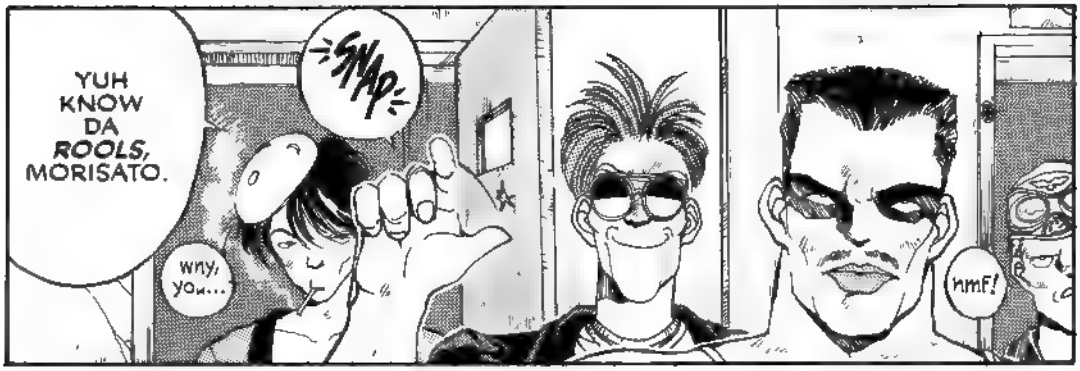
DON'T WORRY!
MY JOB AS AN "ANTENNA" IS OVER NOW.
SO I'LL BE HERE WITH YOU FROM NOW ON.
WELL.. THAT'S *GREAT*, BUT..
THERE'S A PROBLEM. YOU SEE, THIS DORM IS SINGLE-SEX. COMPLETELY OFF-LIMITS TO WOMEN.
OH, THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM
IT *WON'T?*
SO IF THEY *CATCH* YOU IN HERE...
AND LOOK AT THAT HOLE IN THE ROOF!
...THEY'LL THROW ME OUT.

SO, UH... I WANT YOU TO LEAVE FOR JUST A *LITTLE* WHILE, ANYWAY... OKAY?
THD THDD
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
I'M NOT A *WOMAN*... I'M A *GODDESS!*
WELL, I'M SORRY, BUT...
OH DEAR... YOU *DO?*
THDD THDD
WHAT ?!
...UNFORTUNATELY THE FORCE OF THE WISH WORKS UPON *YOU*, TOO.

IF YOU EVEN *SAY* SOMETHING LIKE THAT, IT'S LIABLE TO CAUSE... TROUBLE.
"TROUBLE" ...?! W-WHAT *KIND* OF TROUBLE ?!
Pop
KNOCK!
KNOCK!

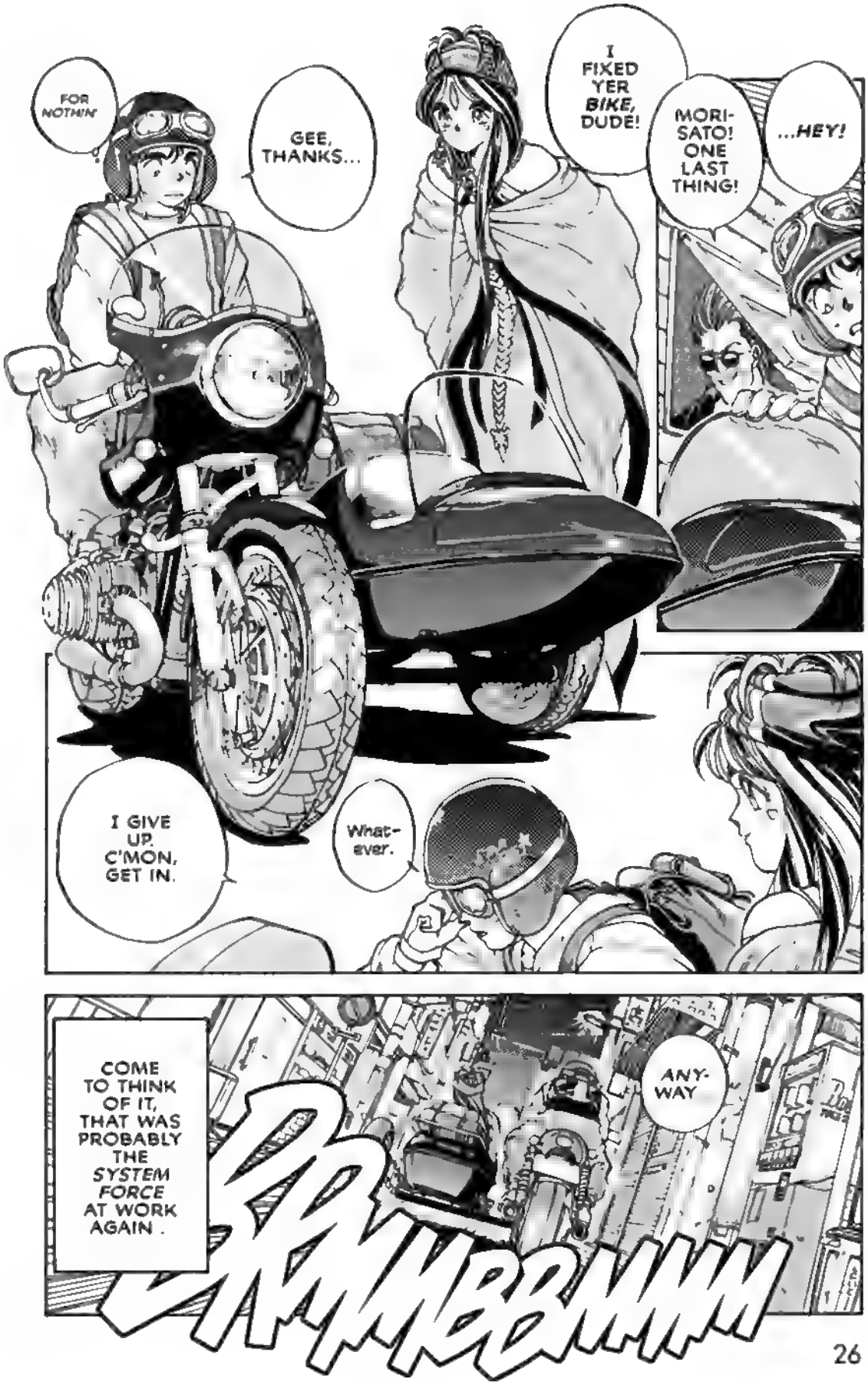
YO! *MORISATO!* YUH TAKE M'*CALLS* LIKE I TOLE YUH?


...IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THE TROUBLE HAS BEGUN.
OH, DEAR...


YUH KNOW DA ROOLS, MORISATO.
SNAP
wny, you...
nmf!

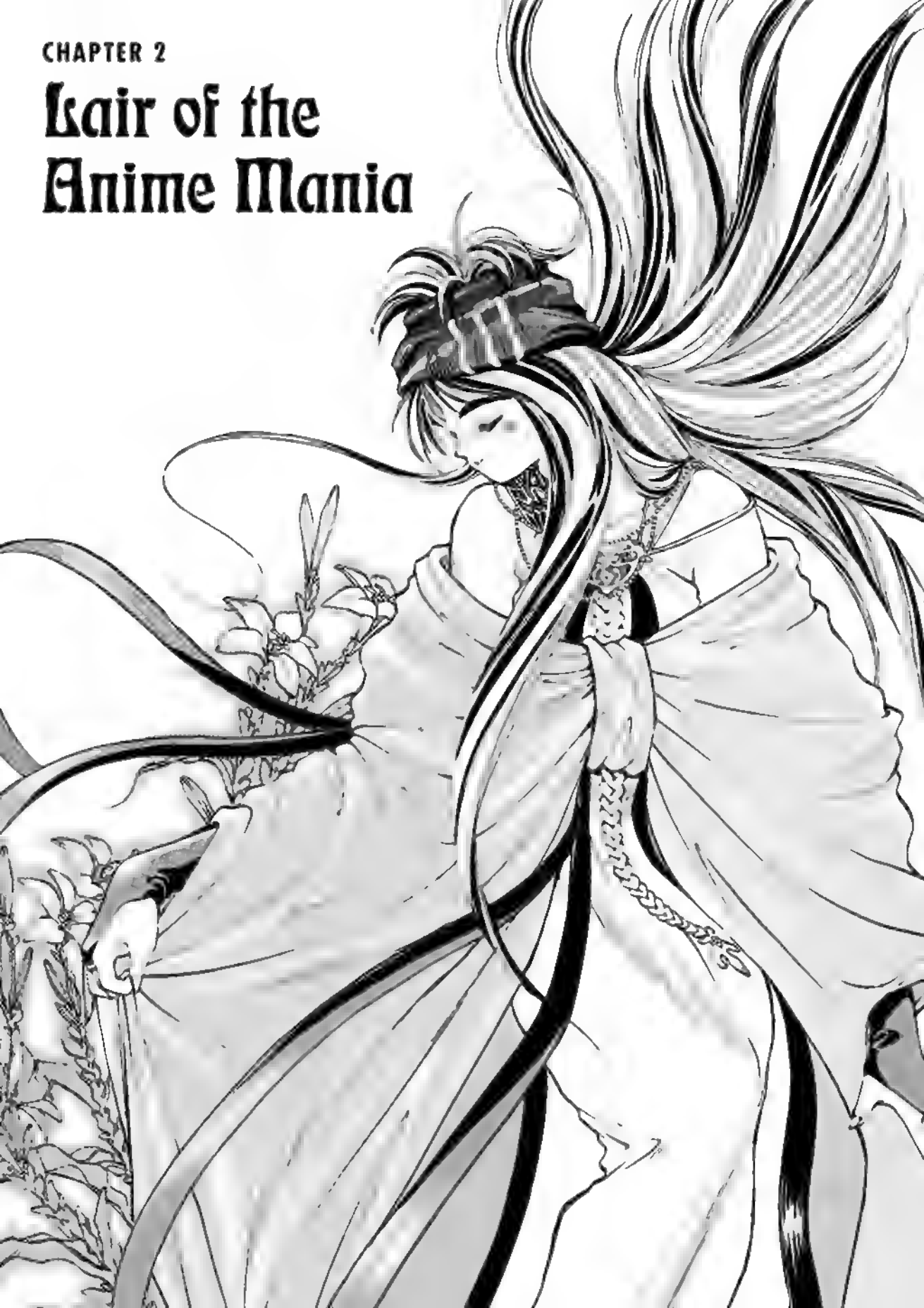
THROW 'EM OUT!
AN' WHADDA WE DO WHEN SOMEONE BREAKS DA ROOLS, BOYS?
OUT!
OUT!
OUT!
OUT!
OUT!
NOOO!

MEN'S DORM
SLAM
LET US KNOW WHEN YOU GET A NEW PLACE! WE'LL SEND OVER THE *REST* OF YOUR CRAP!
IT'LL START WORKING THAT WAY ANYTIME SOMETHING THREATENS TO SEPARATE US.
THAT'S THE FORCE OF YOUR WISH...
--huh?
THE SIDECAR ON MY BEEMER'S BUSTED, SO--
?
YEAH...? WELL, THIS TIME IT MIGHT NOT MAKE ANY DIFFER-ENCE.


FOR NOTHIN'
GEE, THANKS...
I FIXED YER BIKE, DUDE!
MORI-SATO! ONE LAST THING!
...HEY!
I GIVE UP. C'MON, GET IN.
What-ever.
COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT WAS PROBABLY THE SYSTEM FORCE AT WORK AGAIN.
ANY-WAY
VAAHHHHHHH

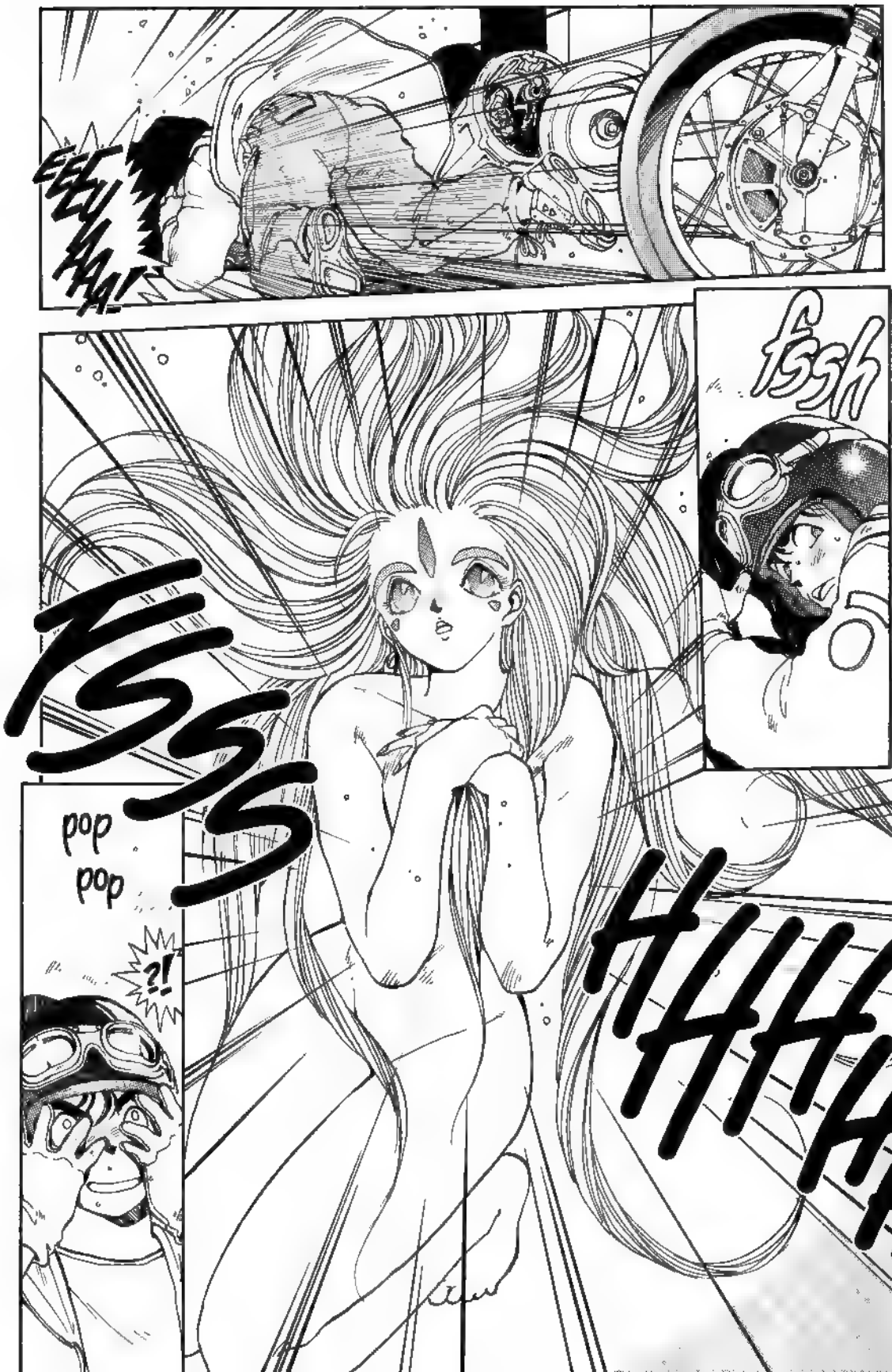
CHAPTER 2

Lair of the Anime Mania



WELL THAT WAS THE *TENTH* PLACE
SHEESH! AND HE SAYS HE'S MY *FRIEND?*
SORRY, MAN. GOT MY GIRLFRIEND HERE... IF YA KNOW WHAT I *MEAN*...
AW, THAT'S OKAY... WE'VE STILL GOT A FEW OPTIONS...
...YOU GOT THROWN OUT OF YOUR DORM JUST BECAUSE OF ME.
I'M SO SORRY...
EVERY-ONE'S STARING AT US.
TOO BAD YOU CAN'T DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR *OUTFIT,* THOUGH.
IS SHE EAST INDIAN . .?
LOOK AT *HER!*

THERE WON'T BE ANY STORES OPEN AT ONE IN THE MORNING...
LIKE I *HAVE* ANY MONEY... EVEN IF SOME-PLACE *WAS* OPEN!
OH, MY! I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T REALIZE.
IS IT REALLY THAT CONSPICU-OUS. .?
YOW!
FZZKKK
LAST TIME SHE BLASTED A *HOLE* IN THE ROOF!
VVVVVVV
FZZKKK
OH, *NO!* N-NOT *AGAIN!*


EEEUHHH!
fssh
FSSS
pop
pop
?!
HHHHHH

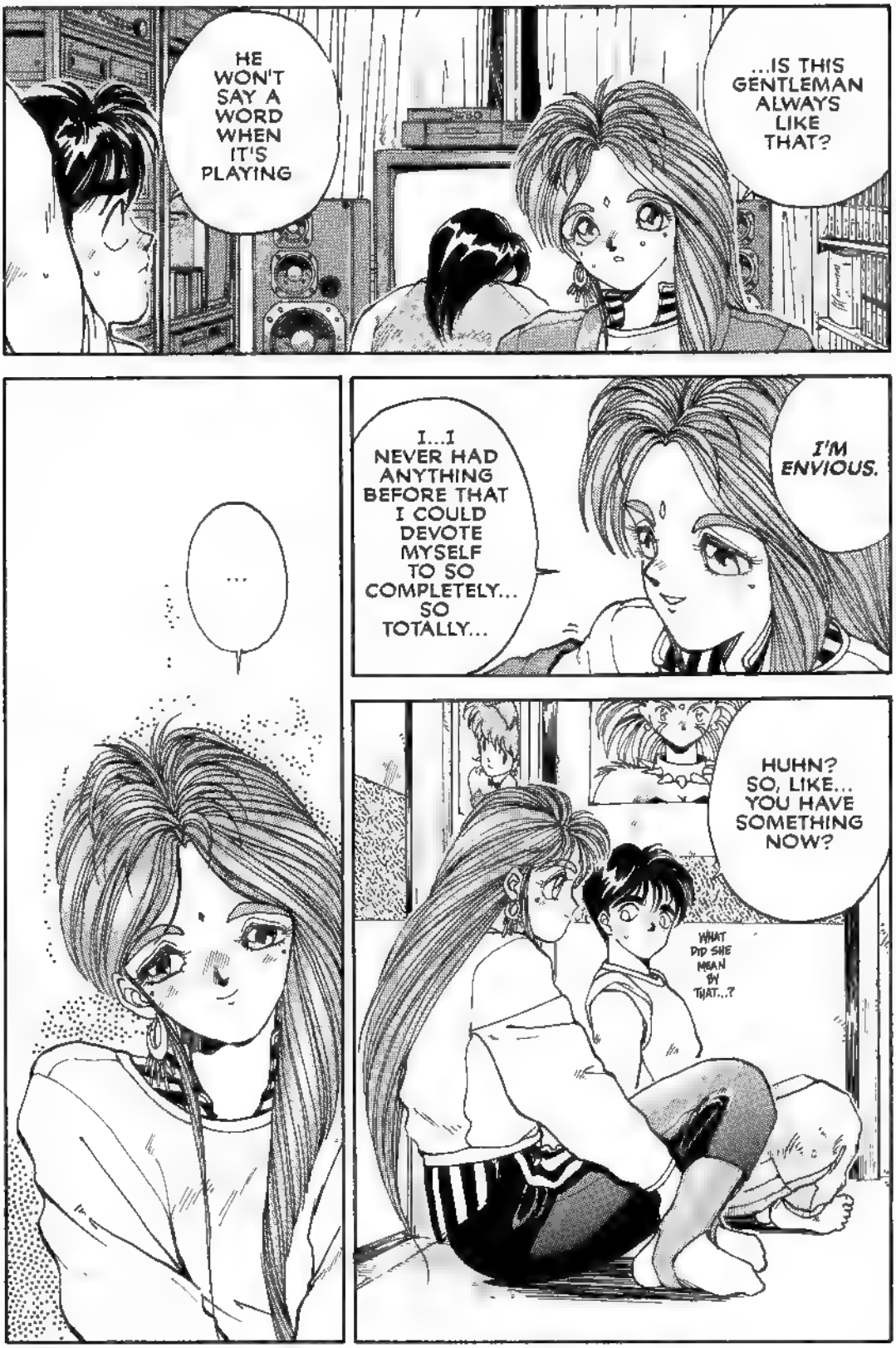
WHUH... H- HOW'D YOU DO THAT?!
IS THIS BETTER ...?
OH, I JUST DISMANTLED MATTER AT THE ATOMIC LEVEL AND REARRANGED IT A LITTLE.
IT'S EASY, BUT I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL. . I CAN'T DO THIS MORE THAN TWO OR THREE TIMES A DAY
Dingg- Dongg
SO? SHALL WE GO?
IT'S EASY...
.....

MMM... DARJEELING, ISN'T IT?
WOW, THANKS, MAN. NO ONE ELSE WOULD PUT US UP TONIGHT!
NOT A PROBLEM...
uh-oh
OH, MAN... WHAT A BABE
I JUST LOVE GOOD TEA!
STOP! WAIT!! AT LEAST GIMME HER NUMBER!
I FORGOT -- HE CAN'T BE TRUSTED AROUND ANYTHING FEMALE!

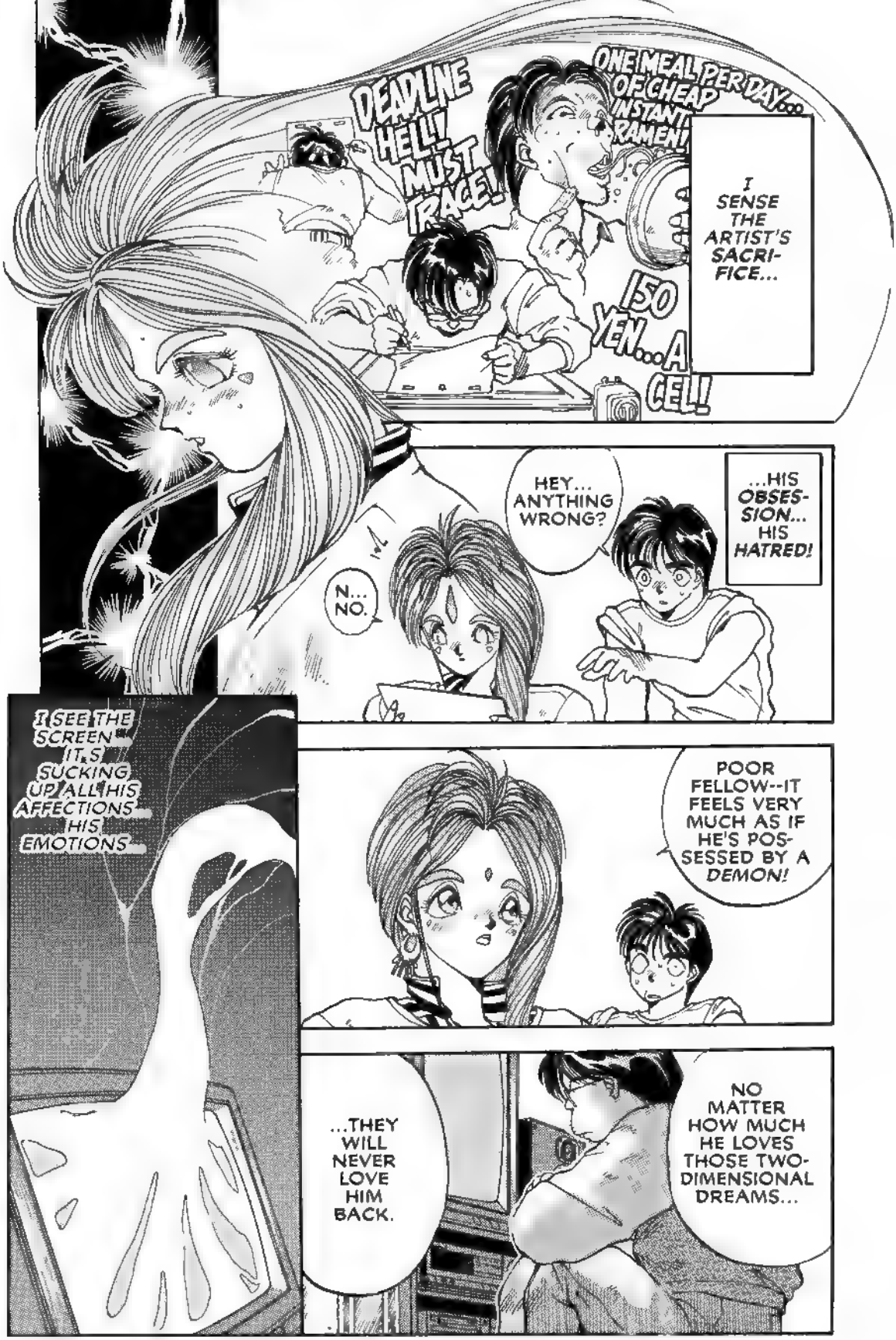
OH, MY!
GOSH

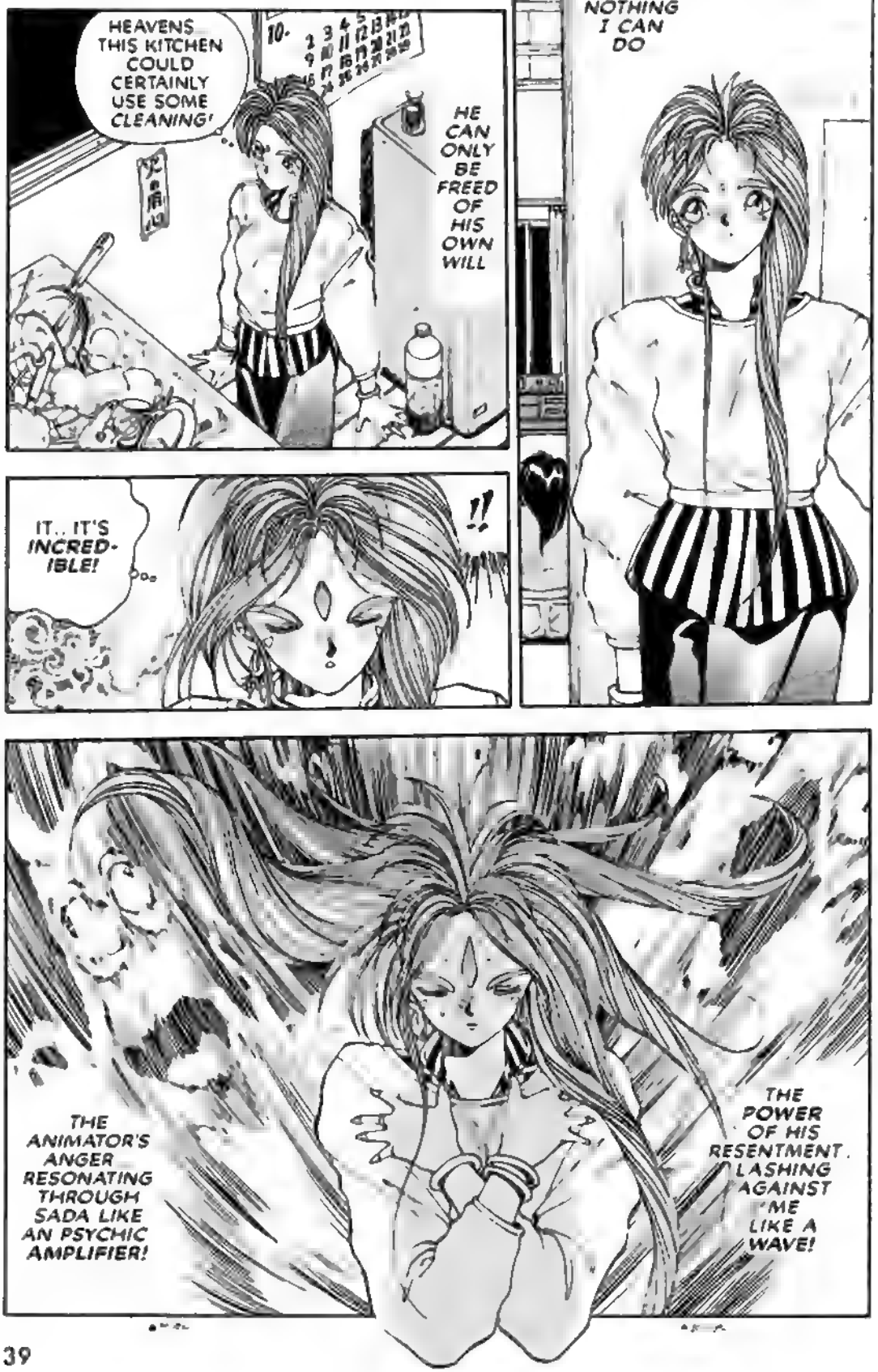
THIS IS... AMAZING!
....
...WHEN I'M SUR-PRISED.
OH... IT JUST DOES THAT..
WH-WHAT'S WITH THAT MARK ON YOUR FORE-HEAD?
HUH...? OH, HEY. KEIICHI. HAVE A SEAT, MAN. I'M WATCHIN' MAGICAL MAI.

SOMETIMES HE'LL SPEND THE WHOLE DAY LIKE THAT, JUST STARING STRAIGHT INTO THE SCREEN.
ANIME MANIA.
BE RIGHT WITH YOU. SOON AS I FINISH MEMORIZING THE CREDITS.
...WHOA! DON'T--!
...WHO MADE THIS?
...
OH, SUCH BEAUTI-FUL PICTURES!
...
M SIR...?


HE WON'T SAY A WORD WHEN IT'S PLAYING
...IS THIS GENTLEMAN ALWAYS LIKE THAT?
I...I NEVER HAD ANYTHING BEFORE THAT I COULD DEVOTE MYSELF TO SO COMPLETELY... SO TOTALLY...
I'M ENVIOUS.
...
HUHN? SO, LIKE... YOU HAVE SOMETHING NOW?
WHAT DID SHE MEAN BY THAT...?

THERE! IT SEEMS TO BE OVER...
HMM... I'D BETTER WATCH IT AGAIN.
VREEE
click
ENNT
THIS IS QUITE INTER-ESTING. I WISH I COULD SPEAK WITH HIM SOME-HOW. .
!

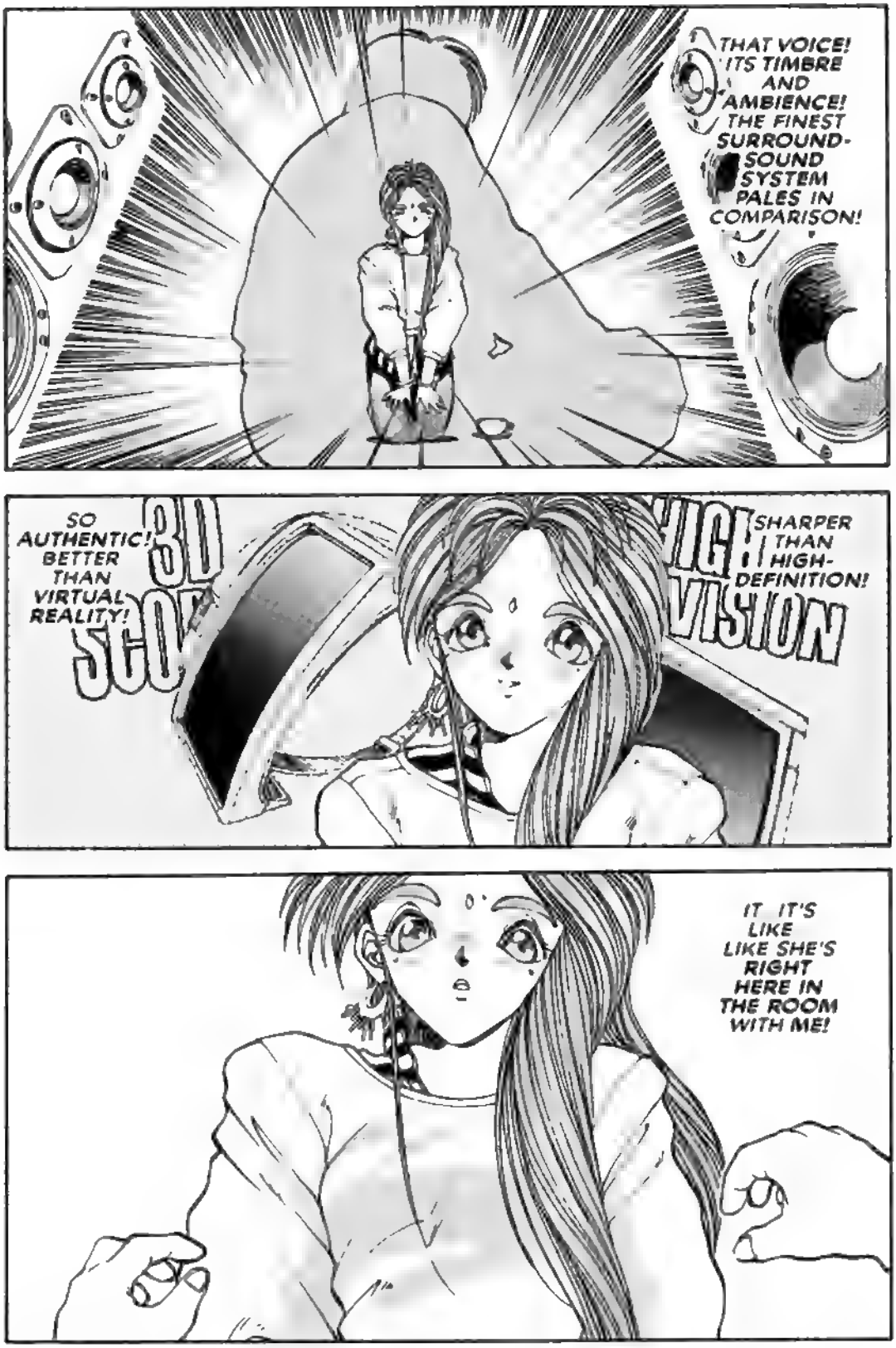

I SENSE THE ARTIST'S SACRI-FICE...
DEADLINE HELL! MUST TRACE!
ONE MEAL PER DAY... OF CHEAP INSTANT RAMEN!
150 YEN...A CEL!
HEY... ANYTHING WRONG?
N... NO.
...HIS OBSES-SION... HIS HATRED!
I SEE THE SCREEN IT'S SUCKING UP ALL HIS AFFECTIONS... HIS EMOTIONS...
POOR FELLOW--IT FEELS VERY MUCH AS IF HE'S POS-SESSED BY A DEMON!
...THEY WILL NEVER LOVE HIM BACK.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE LOVES THOSE TWO-DIMENSIONAL DREAMS...


HEAVENS... THIS KITCHEN COULD CERTAINLY USE SOME CLEANING!
HE CAN ONLY BE FREED OF HIS OWN WILL
SADLY, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO
IT.. IT'S INCRED-IBLE!
!!
THE ANIMATOR'S ANGER RESONATING THROUGH SADA LIKE AN PSYCHIC AMPLIFIER!
THE POWER OF HIS RESENTMENT. LASHING AGAINST ME LIKE A WAVE!

TSSHH
FZZKK
I MUST ACT QUICKLY!
FWWKK
HMM... I THINK THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE...
thmp

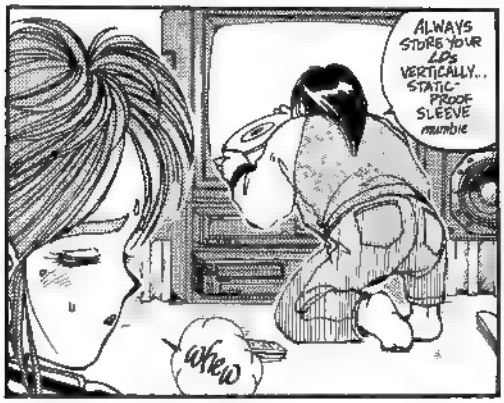
HMM... THAT WOMAN MORISATO BROUGHT IN'S BEEN NOTHIN' BUT NOISE.
...WOMEN? HA! THESE ARE THE ONLY WOMEN WHO MATTER TO ME!
...ONLY THEY WILL NEVER BETRAY ME!
...?
...SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD..
WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME TEA?
!

OH, MR. SADA! AT LAST YOU *LOOKED* AT ME!
...O-OVER TH-THERE.
P-P-PUT IT D-DOWN...
...IT'S **HER!**
PLEASE. HAVE SOME BEFORE IT GETS COLD.
THE SCENT... IT'S NOT JUST THE TEA...


THAT VOICE! ITS TIMBRE AND AMBIENCE! THE FINEST SURROUND-SOUND SYSTEM PALES IN COMPARISON!
SO AUTHENTIC! BETTER THAN VIRTUAL REALITY!
SHARPER THAN HIGH-DEFINITION!
IT IT'S LIKE LIKE SHE'S RIGHT HERE IN THE ROOM WITH ME!

...LIKE I COULD TOUCH HER!
OH!
OH?
OH?

KLAK
HEY!


ALWAYS STORE YOUR CDs VERTICALLY... STATIC-PROOF SLEEVE
whew

OH, YEAH... RIGHT.
YOUR DISC'S OVER.

...HE HAD ME WORRIED THERE.
OH... THANK YOU!
...YOU ASKED WHO MADE IT...
EXCUSE ME...?
DIRECTOR: SATOSHI IWASAKI. ANIMATION DIRECTOR: SATORU NAKAMURA. MUSIC: NOZOMI OMORI.
mutter... mutter
NO...THAT GUY'S JUST THE DIRECTOR, YOU SEE...
...
SO...MR. IWASAKI DREW ALL THE PICTURES ...?
LOOK... THIS GUY DOESN'T HAVE ANY, ER..."BABE RESISTANCE"... SO IF YOU SUDDENLY START ACTING--
shuffle shuffle
PSST!
--WAIT A SEC. LEMME SHOW YOU ONE OF MY FAVORITES.

UH, SORRY I'LL GET OUT OF YOUR WAY.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT... GET OUT OF MY WAY.
WHAT IS THIS STRANGE SENSATION...
?!
WHO DOESN'T HAVE WHAT?
gulp
THIS IS IT.

tinggg
SUCH SOFT HANDS... SO NICE AND WARM...
HIS THOUGHTS ARE POURING INTO ME...!
SIGHT... SOUND... SMELL... AND NOW... TOUCH!
THIS IS BETTER THAN ANIME IN EVERY WAY!! THE ONLY SENSE STILL UNFULFILLED...

EEEEEK!
...IS TASTE!
I USED ALL MY POWER REFOR-MATTING THE TEAPOT!
OH, NO!! I...I CAN'T EVEN PUSH HIM AWAY!

HURK
WHRAK
BACK OFF... OR IT'S YOUR LD PLAYER NEXT!!
THAT'S ENOUGH, SADA!
oog
WELL... THANKS FOR LETTING US HANG OUT.
...

HEY!
BUT..
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME, KEIICHI.
SO TAKE IT... AND WATCH IT.
HERE...I COULDN'T PLAY IT FOR YOU.
huh-huh-huh-huh... REAL WOMEN ARE COOL.
AND SO SADA RENOUNCED HIS ANIME MANIA... AND REPLACED IT WITH .. ADULT-VIDEO MANIA.
THAT'S RIGHT...I DON'T NEED THAT ANY-MORE. I'VE SEEN WHAT A REAL WOMAN IS LIKE.
THANK YOU! I PROMISE I'LL GIVE IT A GOOD HOME!
WELL.. BACK TO THE ROAD

CHAPTER 3
A Man's Home Is His... Temple?

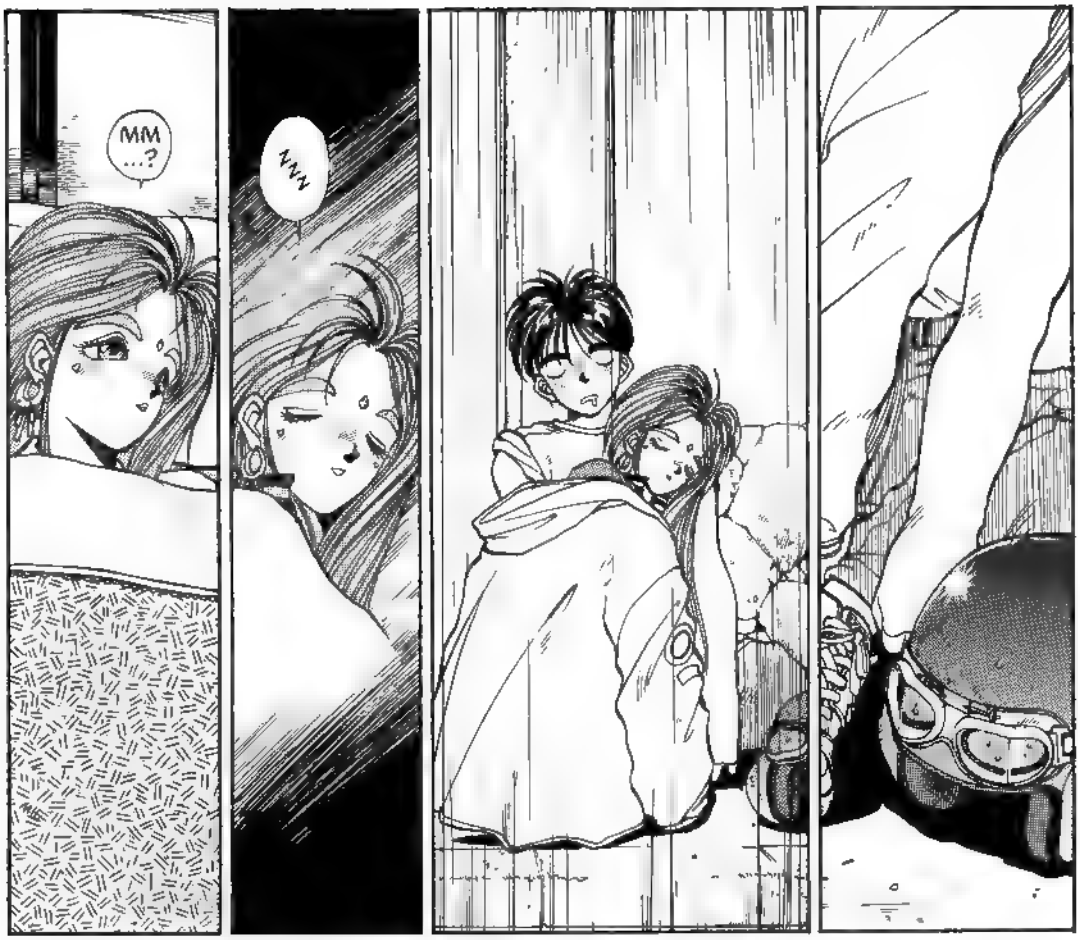
KANG
KANG
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ANY HELP
I'VE SET IT UP BY MYSELF PLENTY OF TIMES
NO I AM FINE
KANG
GEEZ GOOD THING I REMEMBERED I HAD THIS TENT
KANG

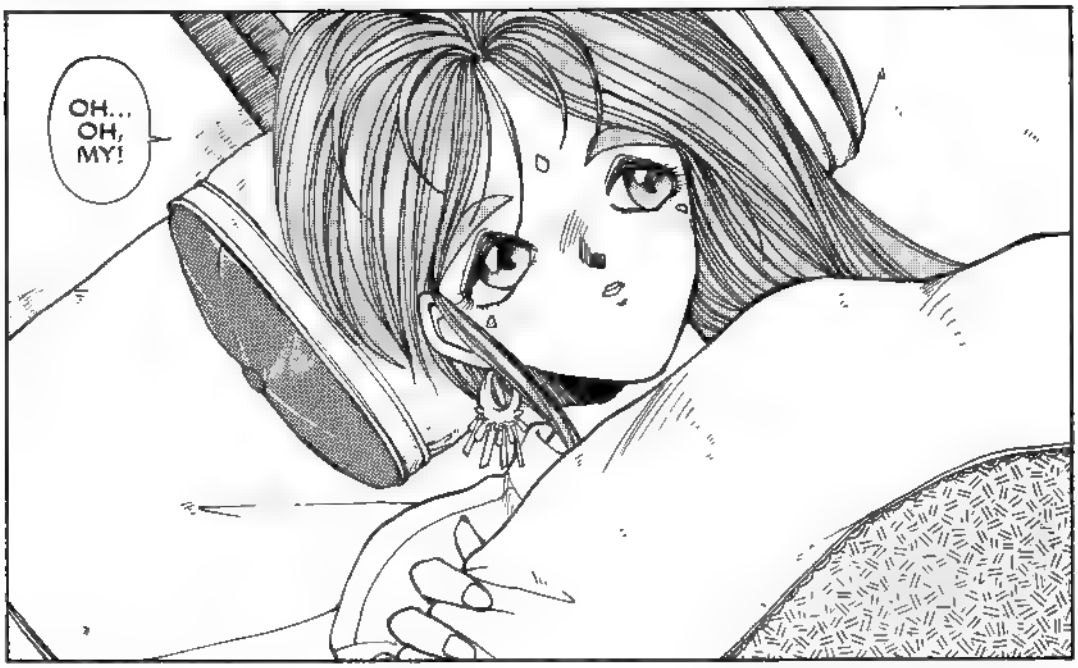
...IT'S SURELY GOING TO RAIN.
SHKK
THE WAY IT'S BLOWING...
OH... SMELL THAT BREEZE...
SHKK
WAIT A SEC!
COME TO THINK OF IT... I'VE ONLY GOT ONE SLEEPING BAG.
I MEAN, YEE-HAW!
WHICH MEANS... UH-OH!
OH, MAN... WHAT AM I GONNA DO?!
plish
YOU GOT IT, KIDDO!

!!
GET INTO THE--
WHAT TH-- NOW IT'S RAINING!
HUH...?
B-BELL-DANDY ...?!
HEY!
H-HEY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
NNNN

OH, NO!!
URK!
HOW CAN YOU SLEEP THROUGH ALL THIS!?
SPLASH
WHO.
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
WHAT KEIICHI DOESN'T YET KNOW IS THAT WHEN BELLDANDY USES HER POWERS TOO OFTEN, SHE FALLS ASLEEP
WELL, IT WAS THREE HOURS SINCE I USED IT

VRM
NOW WHAT DO I DO? THERE'S NO PLACE LEFT FOR ME TO GO!
VRM
ZzZ
WELL LET'S AT LEAST GET OUT OF THE RAIN UNDER THAT GATE

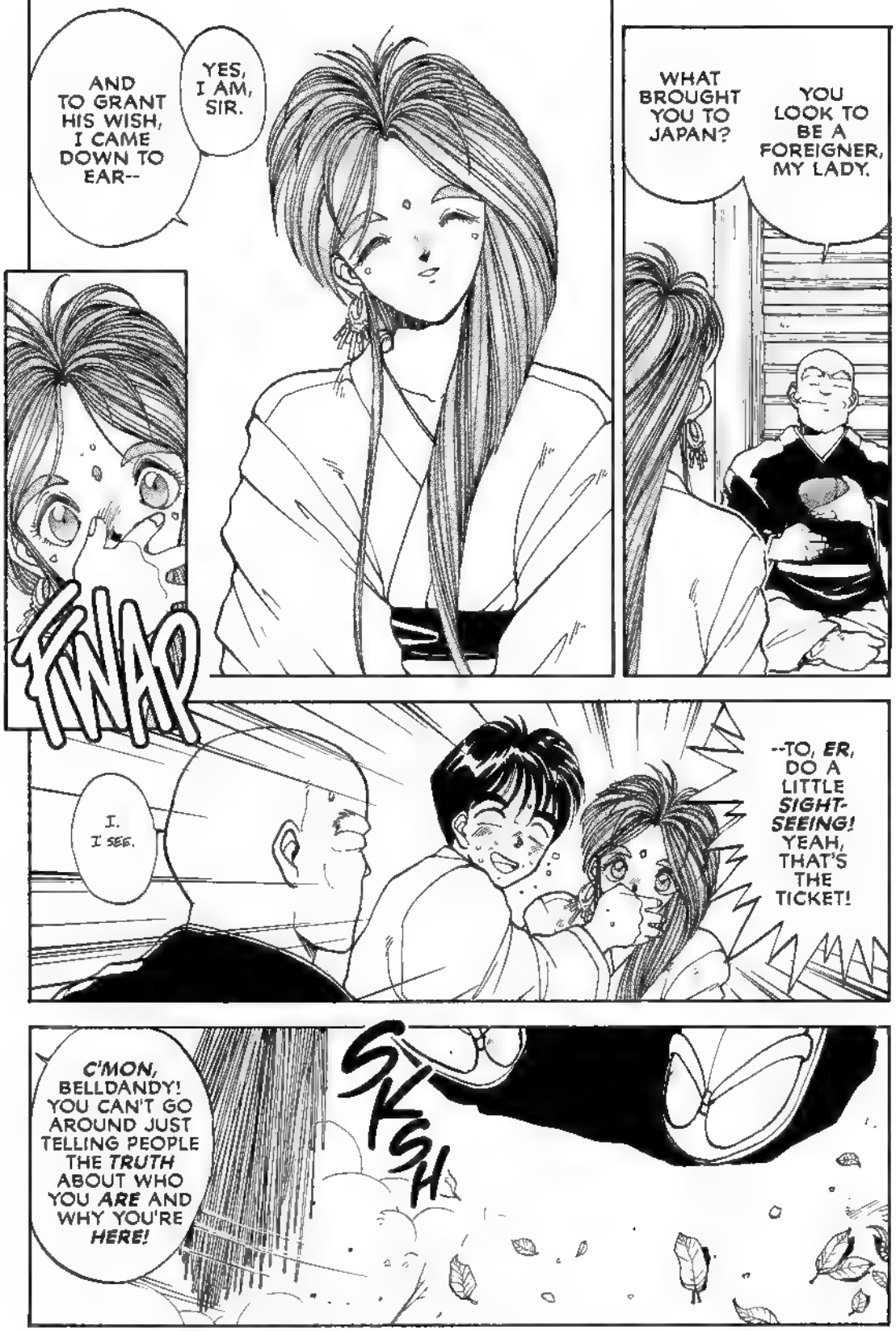

MM ...?
NNN


OH... OH, MY!

OH!
NGG ...?
WHERE ARE WE, I WONDER ...?
MNF.
GOOD MORNING, KEIICHI!
YACK!

E-EXCUSE ME ...?
SMACK KRAK
FWAK
AGEE!
WE-- WE'RE IN THE SAME BED!
WHEN YOU ARRIVED TOGETHER LAST NIGHT, I JUST ASSUMED THE TWO OF YOU WERE... LOVERS.
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
HRM.
MY APOLOGIES, YOUNG LADY. I'M AFRAID I MAY HAVE INADVERTENTLY PUT YOU IN A DIFFICULT POSITION.

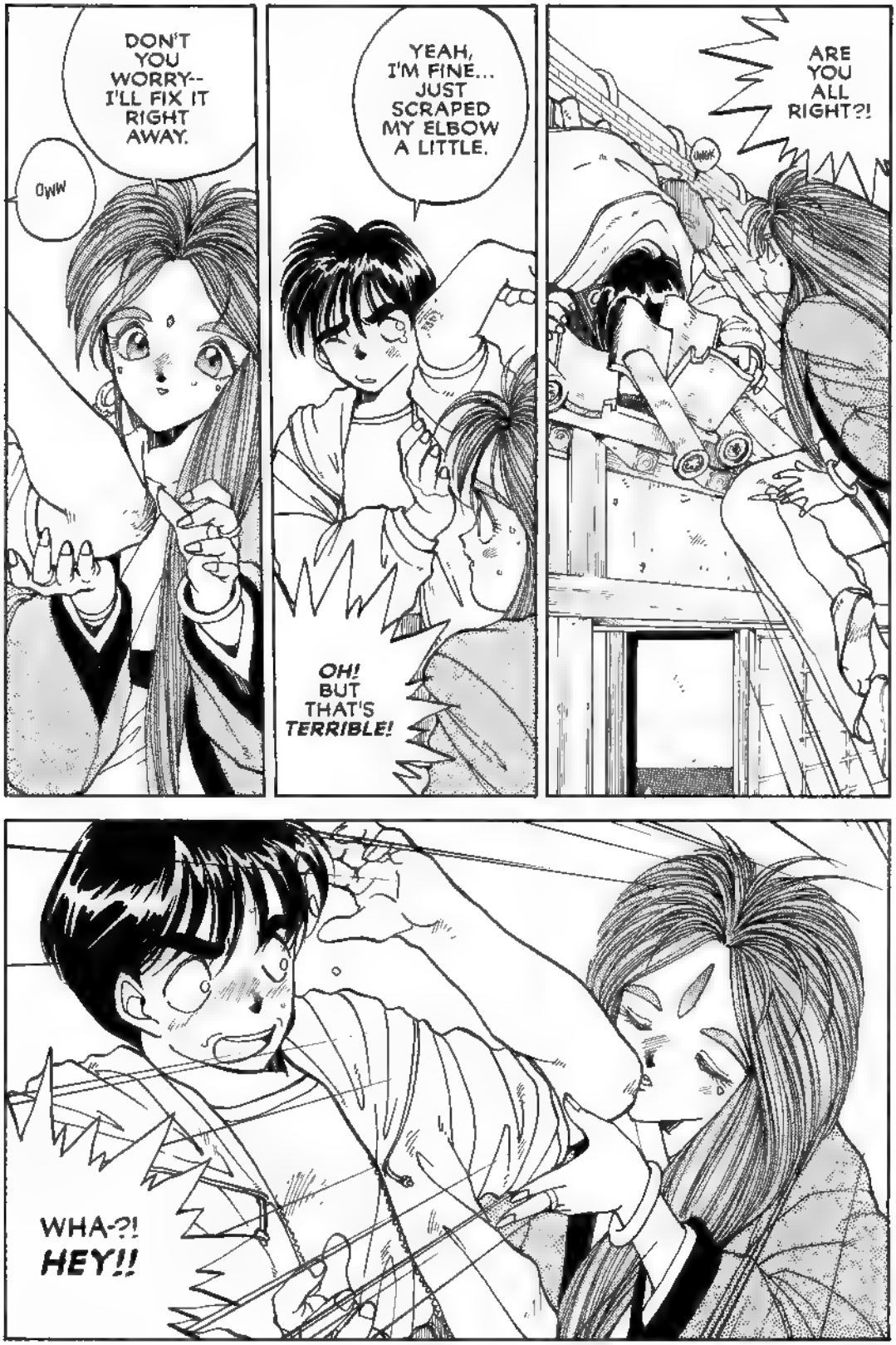
HA-HA-HA-HA!
ME-- JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS! BUT THIS MAN WON'T TROUBLE YOU AGAIN.
ALSO, YOUR CLOTHES ARE DRYING.
SIR! SIR!! WAIT!!
SORRY ABOUT THAT BEATING, YOUNG LAD.
...EH?
THAT WASN'T ME SCREAMING-- IT WAS HIM.
AS I SAID, I HAVE ACHIEVED MASTERY IN JUMPING TO CONCLU-SIONS.
NOW, THEN...
HE MAKES IT SOUND LIKE A SKILL


AND TO GRANT HIS WISH, I CAME DOWN TO EAR--
YES, I AM, SIR.
WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO JAPAN?
YOU LOOK TO BE A FOREIGNER, MY LADY.
FWAP
I, I SEE.
--TO, ER, DO A LITTLE SIGHT-SEEING! YEAH, THAT'S THE TICKET!
C'MON, BELLDANDY! YOU CAN'T GO AROUND JUST TELLING PEOPLE THE TRUTH ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU'RE HERE!
SKSH

. .WHAT?
AND ALSO...
BUT... I CAN'T TELL A *LIE,* EITHER.
I DON'T FEEL ANY ILL WILL TOWARDS US IN THIS TEMPLE.
I BELIEVE IT'S SOMEHOW *PROPER* FOR US TO BE HERE... *FATE.*
"ILL WILL" ...?
WELL, THAT PRIEST'S GOT NO HARD FEELINGS ABOUT *WORKING* US TO DEATH, THAT'S FOR SURE.
FIX YOUR *OWN* ROOF, WHY DON'T YOU?
SHEESH

!!
YAAA!
UH-OH!
OOPS!
KEIICHI!
Spirit of the Roof Tiles, Hear My Words!
I am the Goddess Belldandy!

Save Ye This Man!
ENNK
Bop
KRIK


DON'T YOU WORRY-- I'LL FIX IT RIGHT AWAY.
OWW
YEAH, I'M FINE... JUST SCRAPED MY ELBOW A LITTLE.
OH! BUT THAT'S TERRIBLE!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
UHHK
WHA-?! HEY!!

Y-YES, MA'AM. ♥
DON'T MOVE.
WHOA... IT'S COMPLETELY HEALED?
I ACCELERATED YOUR METABOLISM TO RECONSTRUCT THE SKIN.
....
IT'S A GOOD THING HE COULDN'T SEE WHAT SHE DID BEFORE SHE FLEW ONTO THE ROOF...
I COULD HAVE SWORN SHE FLEW ONTO THE ROOF...!
HRM. WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

IF, AS I FEAR, THAT'S REALLY A DEMON IN FEMALE FORM, IT SHOULD SHOW ITS *TRUE* NATURE IN THE NIGHT.
GZXX
SHFF
SHHHK
IT MAY BE THAT MY EYES DECEIVED ME THIS AFTER-NOON..
BTAM!

FOOL!
YOU LET IT ESCAPE!
NOW... BEFORE HE WAKES UP...
OH, DEAR ...!
Z
HMF
HRN ...?

GOOD MORNING, EVERY-ONE!
AAH ?!
WHAT'S *THIS*?!
HRN. THEN... A *SORCERESS*, PERHAPS?

SHE ALREADY COOKED *BREAK-FAST...?*
...THIS GROWS MORE CONFUSING BY THE MINUTE.
SUCH EXQUISITE FLAVOR... SUBTLE FRAGRANCE... THE PERFECT SOFT TEXTURE...
HRM!! THIS *RICE!*
...I-I CAN'T *BELIEVE* IT!
IS SHE A *CHEF...?*

I'VE NEVER POLISHED THE ALTAR SO WELL!
LOOK AT THIS BRIL-LIANT GLOW!
BUT TO DO SO MUCH, SO WELL, IN SO LITTLE TIME...
CLEARLY SHE IS NO DEMON...
...SHE IS NO ORDINARY MORTAL, EITHER!
AND THAT MARK ON HER FOREHEAD...
COULD IT BE ...?

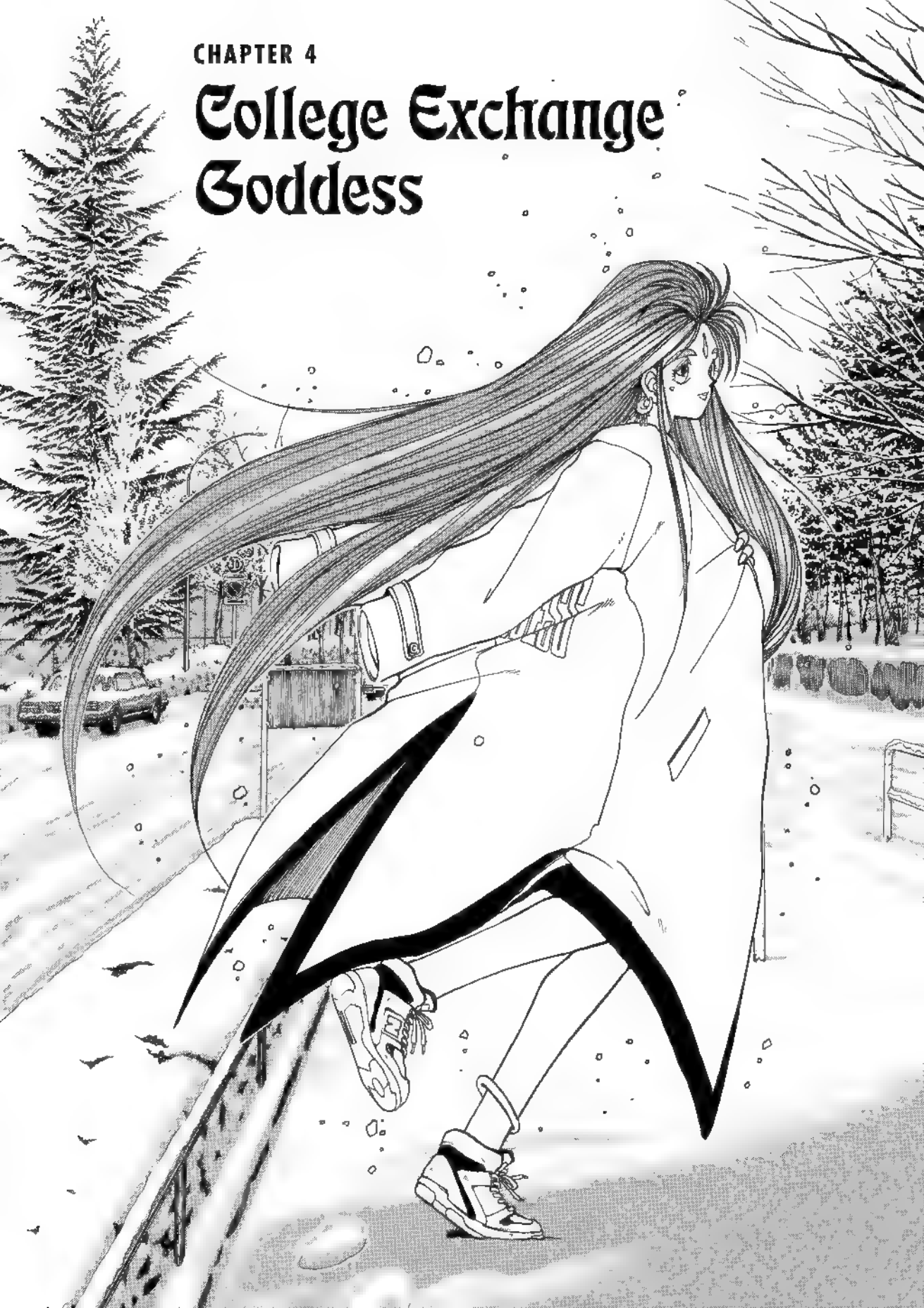
WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED EATING, COME WITH ME TO THE MEDITATION HALL.
I WONDER WHERE THE PRIEST WENT?
IT'S LONG PAST BREAK-FAST TIME...
MNPH?
BUT FIRST-- CHOW TIME!
HEY! DON'T HOG IT ALL!
NOW, NOW
SPLAT
YOU SHOULD BE FASTING TO PURIFY YOURSELF LAD!
...DID I SIGN UP FOR THIS...?

FWAK
CONCEN-TRATE!
IT...IT HAS TO BE! LOOK AT HER ZAZEN MEDITATION! PERFECTION!
SMAK
WHAP
FWACK
AW C'MON! STOP! PLEASE!

THE NEXT DAY
SKSSSHH
KEIICHI! THE PRIEST! HE--
My Lady:
You have awakened me to my spiritual imperfection. I have set forth for India to study the true Buddhism as you yourself have so clearly done. I know it is presumptuous of me, but please use the temple as you wish until I return.
A TRUE MASTER OF JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS, INDEED.
OH, DEAR... I FORGOT TO TELL THE TILES THEY CAN GO BACK NOW.
YOU SEE, THERE'S NO ROOF ANYMORE.
PLIP
SPLISH
SPLT
HM.
NOT QUITE, BELL-DANDY.
WELL... AT LEAST WE HAVE A ROOF OUT OF THE RAIN!

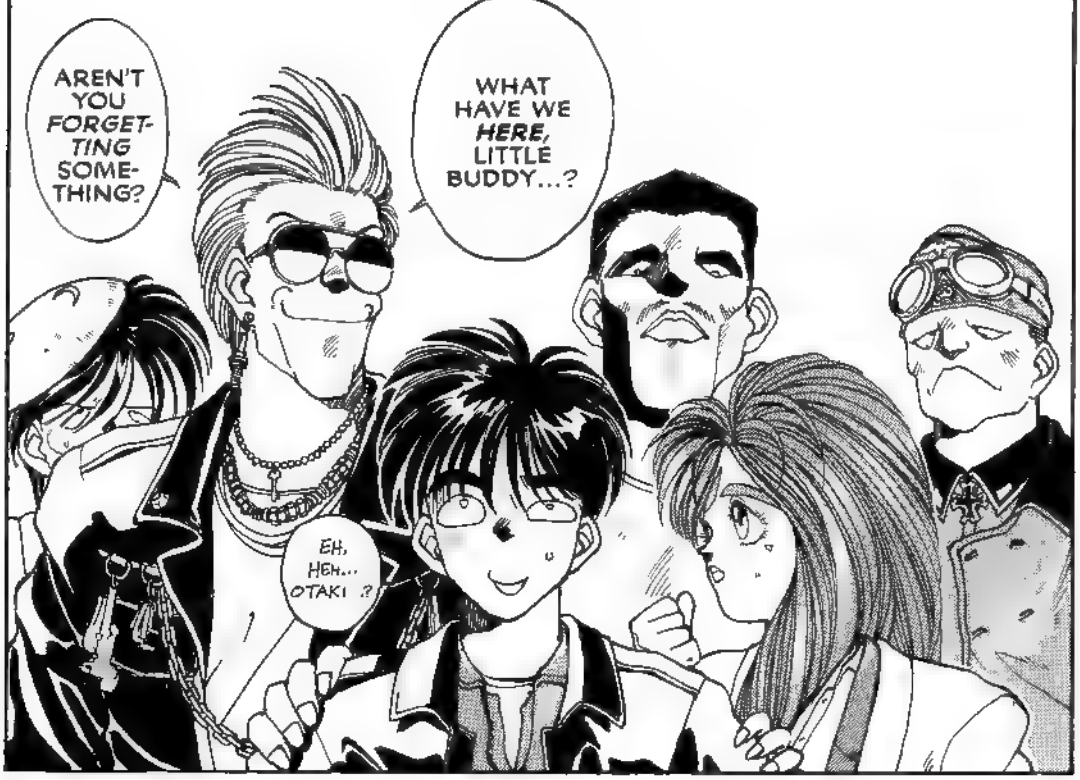
CHAPTER 4

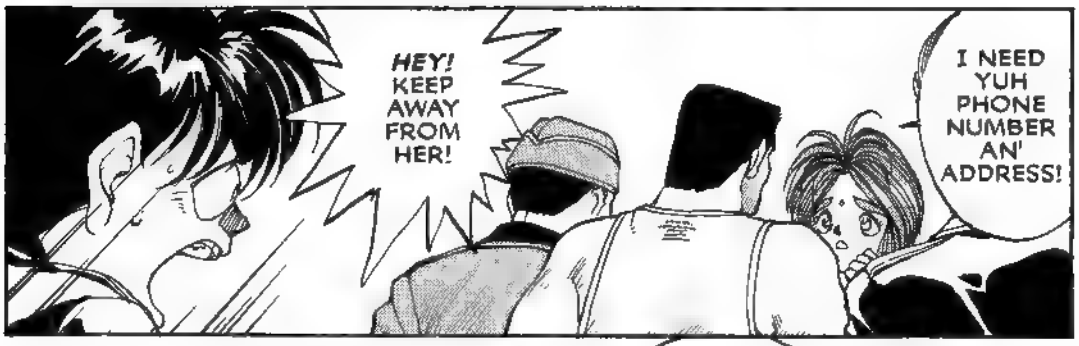
College Exchange Goddess

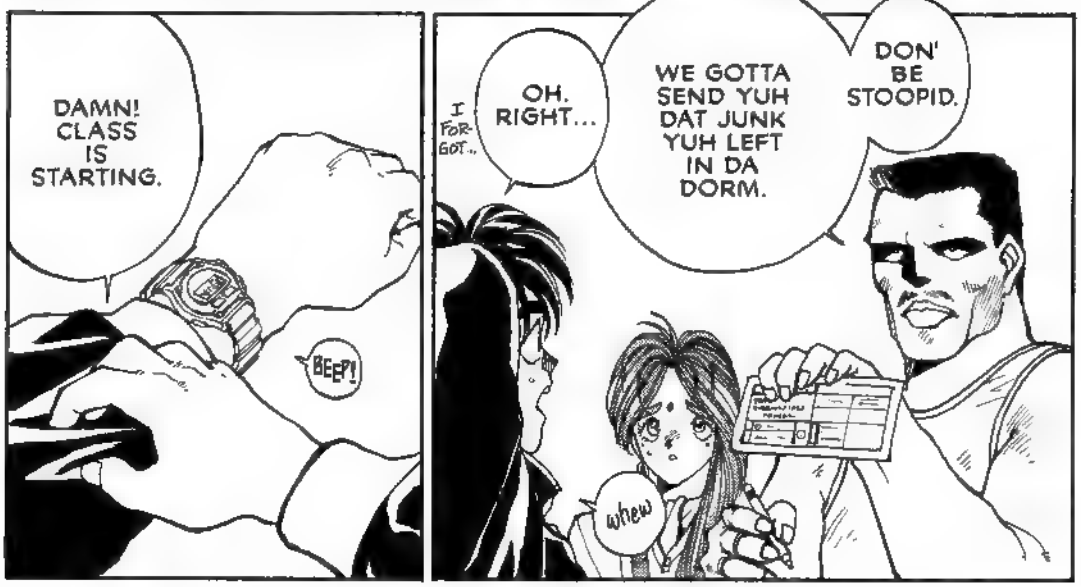


I COULDN'T TURN HER DOWN.
...BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN AN EARTH SCHOOL BEFORE.
WHOA!♥
I'M SORRY... MAKING YOU BRING ME ALONG LIKE THIS...
CAMPUS MAP
...THIS IS *BAD*. SHE STANDS OUT LIKE A SEARCH-LIGHT.
I JUST *COULDN'T*, BUT...

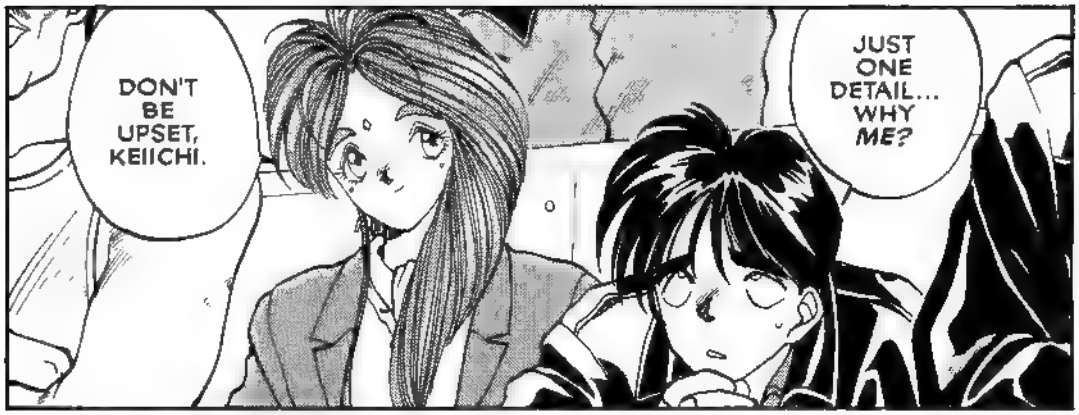
I CUT HIS LECTURE LAST WEEK TO GO HEAR PROFESSOR KAKUTA INSTEAD, SO I'M ON OZAWA'S BLACKLIST ALREADY.
AND I'VE GOT THAT MANIAC OZAWA FOR MY FIRST CLASS-- HE WATCHES ATTENDANCE LIKE A HAWK.
KAKUTA'S GOT THE JUMP ON OZAWA IN THE RACE TO DESIGN A CERAMIC ENGINE, AND THE WHOLE CAMPUS KNOWS IT. OZAWA'S CONSUMED WITH ENVY.
KAKUTA'S CERAMIC ENGINE IS NOTHING BUT AN OVERGROWN FLOWER POT.
I AM DR. OZAWA.
KAKUTA HERE. CALL ME DOC. HEH, HEH.
YOU WISH! I AM THE MASTER OF CERAMIC TECHNO-LOGY.
MORI-SATO... MY BOY.
HMM...I CAN'T SNEAK HER INTO OZAWA'S CLASS. HE'LL SPOT BELL-DANDY FOR SURE.
LET'S GO!
THAP

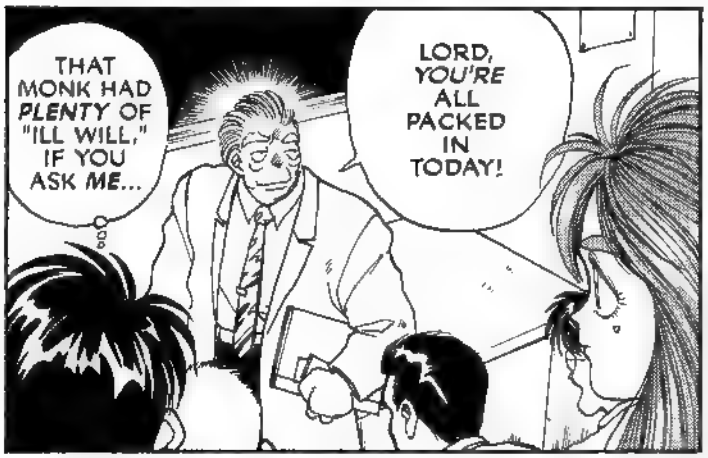

AREN'T YOU *FORGET-TING* SOME-THING?
WHAT HAVE WE ***HERE,*** LITTLE BUDDY...?
EH, HEH... OTAKI ?


HEY! KEEP AWAY FROM HER!
I NEED YUH PHONE NUMBER AN' ADDRESS!

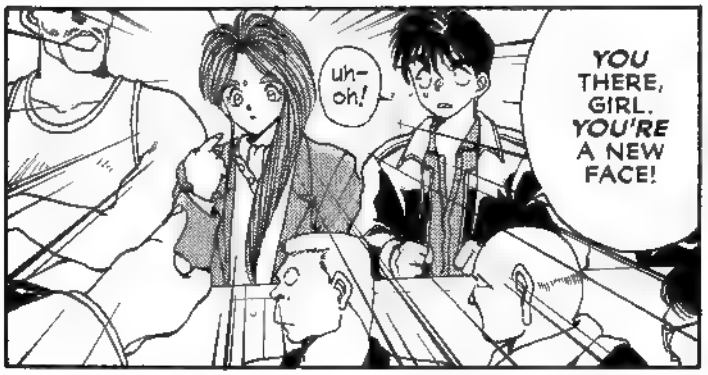

DAMN! CLASS IS STARTING.
BEEP!
I FOR-GOT..
OH. RIGHT...
WE GOTTA SEND YUH DAT JUNK YUH LEFT IN DA DORM.
DON' BE STOOPID.
whew

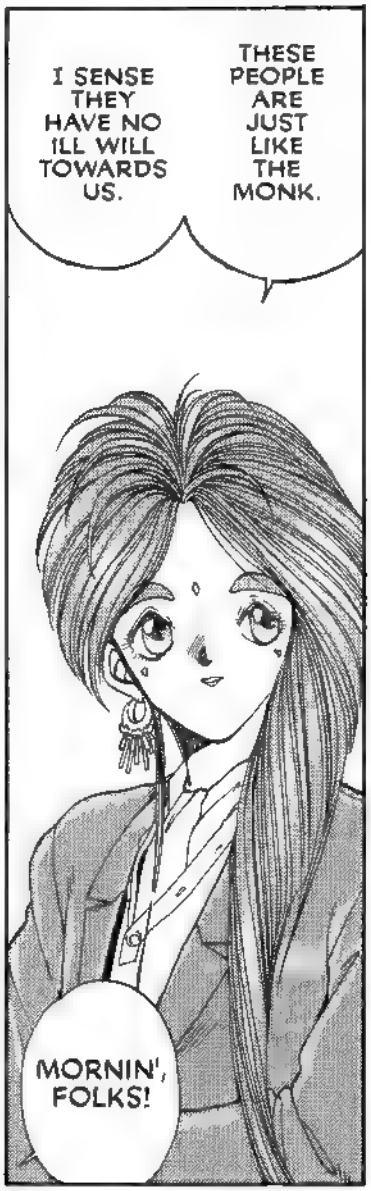
NOW, DAT'S...
...SERI-OUS!
uh-oh
C'MON, DUDE!!
NO! WAIT! I'M TAKING OZAWA'S--
IT'S COOL! WE GOT THE GIRL!
HEY! FOLLOW THE BABE!
NO! THIS IS KAKUTA'S LAB!! NOOO!
OH, YEAH?! COUNT ME IN!
LOOK!♥ THIS WAY!♥ CHECK HER OUT!
YUH GOTTA LEARN NOT TO SWEAT DA DETAILS, KID.
OH, MY!
WHY DO I HAVE TO ATTEND YOUR CLASS...?
I DON'T GET IT.
WOO-WOO!


DON'T BE UPSET, KEIICHI.
JUST ONE DETAIL... WHY *ME?*

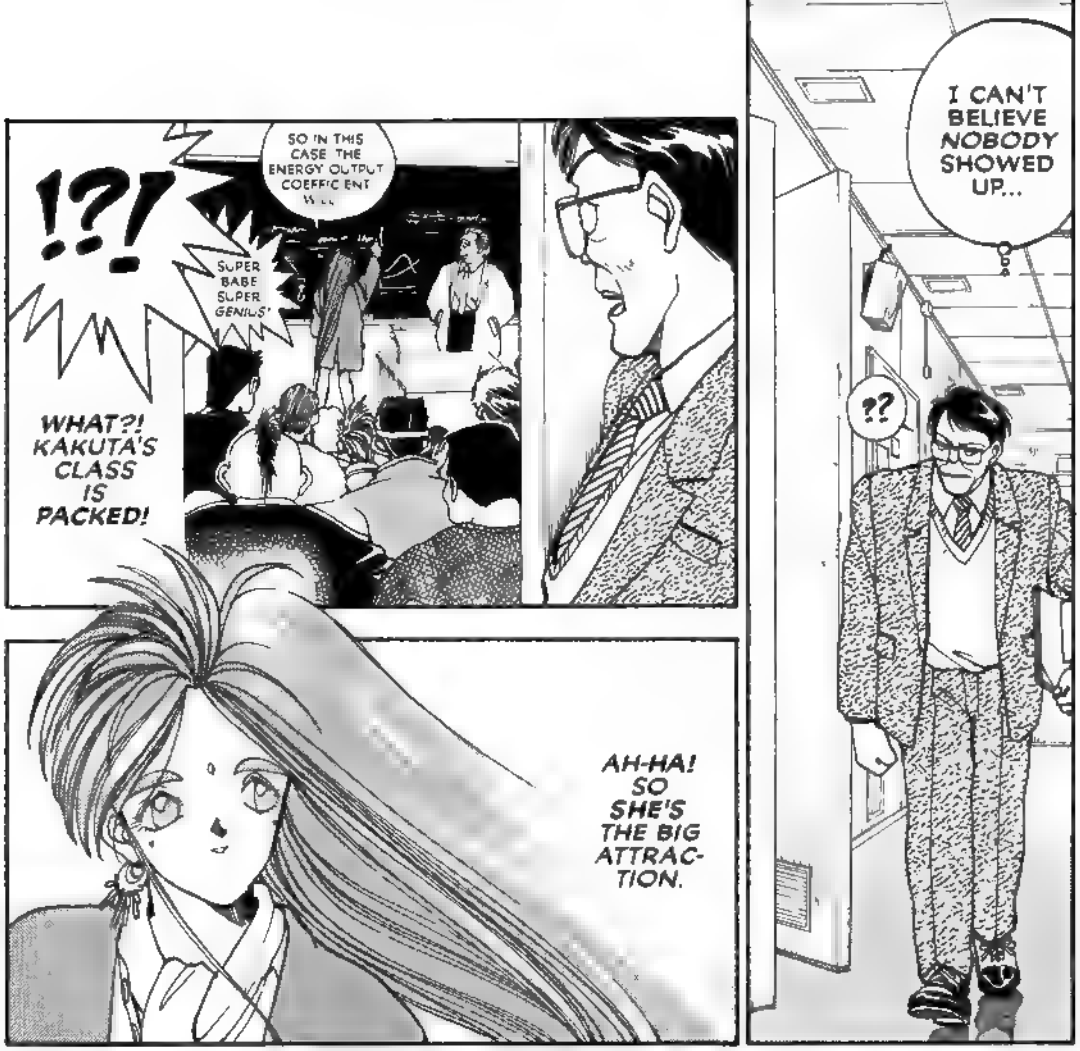

THAT MONK HAD *PLENTY* OF "ILL WILL," IF YOU ASK *ME*...
LORD, *YOU'RE* ALL PACKED IN TODAY!

HM?


uh-oh!
YOU THERE, GIRL. *YOU'RE* A NEW FACE!


I SENSE THEY HAVE NO ILL WILL TOWARDS US.
THESE PEOPLE ARE JUST LIKE THE MONK.
MORNIN', FOLKS!

ALL RIGHT! KAKUTA RULES!
HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH!
...OKAY, THEN.
WELL... IF YOU ALL SAY SO..
H-HEY! D-DOC!
ER... THIS IS BELLDANDY! SHE'S A... er...A FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENT!
GOOD MORNING, CLASS.
MEAN-WHILE...
I SEE EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU DECIDED TO SKIP TODAY.


I CAN'T BELIEVE NOBODY SHOWED UP...
??
!?!
SO IN THIS CASE THE ENERGY OUTPUT COEFFIC ENT
SUPER BABE SUPER GENIUS!
WHAT?! KAKUTA'S CLASS IS PACKED!
AH-HA! SO SHE'S THE BIG ATTRAC-TION.

NEVER SEEN HER AROUND CAMPUS BEFORE...
KAKUTA! MUST YOU STOOP TO HIRING A BEAUTIFUL GIRL TO SIT IN ON YOUR CLASS-- JUST TO BOOST ATTENDANCE?
FIENDISHLY CLEVER! BUT YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!

EH? BUT, SIR--!
THE IDEAL EX-CHANGE STUDENT!
AH, YES. BRIGHT, MOTIVATED, A SPARKLING PERSON-ALITY!
INDEED, THIS IS THE WAY LEARNING SHOULD BE!
YES, KEIICHI?
SEE FOR YOURSELF, OZAWA. HAVE OUR SEMINARS EVER BEEN THIS LIVELY?
...
...
I INSIST YOU EXPEL HER IMMEDI-ATELY!
SHE'S A FAKE, SIR! AN IMPOS-TER!
...DID YOU APPROVE HER APPLICA-TION?
BUT SIR! THIS NEW STUDENT...
EXPEL HER? SHE'S SUCH A NICE YOUNG LADY!
WHY?
HMM. CAN'T QUITE RECALL.

...AND HAVE HER KICKED *STRAIGHT* OFF THIS CAMPUS!
BAH! YOU OLD *FOOL!* I'LL DO IT *MYSELF!* I'LL GET PROOF...
HEADS UP, GUYS! OZAWA'S ON THE MOVE!
HUH --?!
TAK TAKKA TAK
DAT'S *BAD,* OZAWA DON'T *NEVER* GIVE UP...
I'M NO HACKER, BUT...
I BET HE'S GOING TO CHECK TO SEE IF SHE'S REALLY ENROLLED HERE.
WE GOTTA GET INTO THE SYSTEM BEFORE HE LOGS ON.

Ohh...
IT LOCKED ME OUT! DAMN-
YUH BETTER FIND A WAY T' CRACK DAT PASSWORD MORISATO OR WE MEANIN YOU IS BUSTED!
Into Thy Hand I Place Thee Thy Soul
Open Unto Me Your Door!
HEY! I GOT IT!
RIGHT! NOW LET ME JUST UPLOAD THIS

BUT WHO? WHO IS THIS MYSTERY WOMAN HE'LL GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO PROTECT?
MOCKING ME! IT'S AS IF HE DARES ME TO EXPOSE HIM!
ALL RIGHT, KAKUTA, IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG TO PROVE YOUR FRAUD...
..huh?
RECORDS
WH... WHAT THE--?!
GAME OVER

HE GONNA LEAF THROUGH DAT PILE ALL NIGHT?
POOR MAN!
HA! BUT HE FORGETS-- EVERYTHING'S ARCHIVED SOMEWHERE IN THIS GARGANTUAN STACK OF THREE-RING BINDERS!
somewhere...
I FEEL SO SORRY FOR HIM.
CAN'T WE JUST STOP THIS NOW?
THESE ARE, LIKE, OBLIGATORY CAMPUS PRANKS!
WE'VE GONE TOO FAR TO BACK DOWN NOW.
ARE YOU KID-DING?
OH, DEAR...

ONLY FIVE MORE BINDERS TO GO! I'LL SHOW YOU, KAKUTA!
Yeah
FLIP FLIP FLIP FLIP
BRR-INNGG
?? WHO COULD THAT BE?
HELLO? OZAWA HERE.
WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP
WHAT THE--?! CRANK CALL!
ARRG !!
BACK TA TH' STARTIN LINE, EH?
1-14
RECORDS
BLASTED STUDENTS--
huh?

BUT I'LL NEVER GIVE UP! EVEN IF I HAVE TO GO THROUGH EVERY BOOK ALL OVER AGAIN!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I FELL FOR IT! THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK! FOOL!
TIK TIK TIK TIK
IT'S HOPELESS... NO! MUST KEEP SEARCHING...
DAMN! DAMN! WHY IS THERE ALWAYS SO MUCH PAPER-WORK?!
MUSTN'T GIVE UP... MUSTN'T... MUST... sleep.
ZZZZ

KEIICHI, IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW. I CORRECTED THE RECORDS
CORRECT-ED? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I'M SO SORRY TO PUT YOU TO THAT TROUBLE. PLEASE FORGIVE ME, DOCTOR OZAWA!
STUDENT NO. 30478122
DATE OF BIRTH January
NAME BoMdandy
HOME ADDRESS IN A CERTA
MAILING ADDRESS SEE BELOW
CURRENT ADDRESS
TARIKIHONGAN TEMPLE, 3-4-106 NEK
the special case

CHAPTER 5

Those Whom Goddess Hath Joined Together, Let No Woman Put Asunder

SAYOKO MISHIMA, SOPHOMORE
NEKOMI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
MAJOR: ELECTRONICS
ACADEMICS: TOP OF THE CLASS
LOOKS: TOP OF THE SCHOOL
STATUS: QUEEN OF THE CAMPUS
AVERAGE NO. OF MEN SURROUNDING HER: BETWEEN 30 AND 50
PLEASE! GO OUT WITH ME!
MISS SAYOKO!
tap tap
THE MONARCHY IS IN DANGER.
WHOOOSH
tap
TIMES CHANGE.

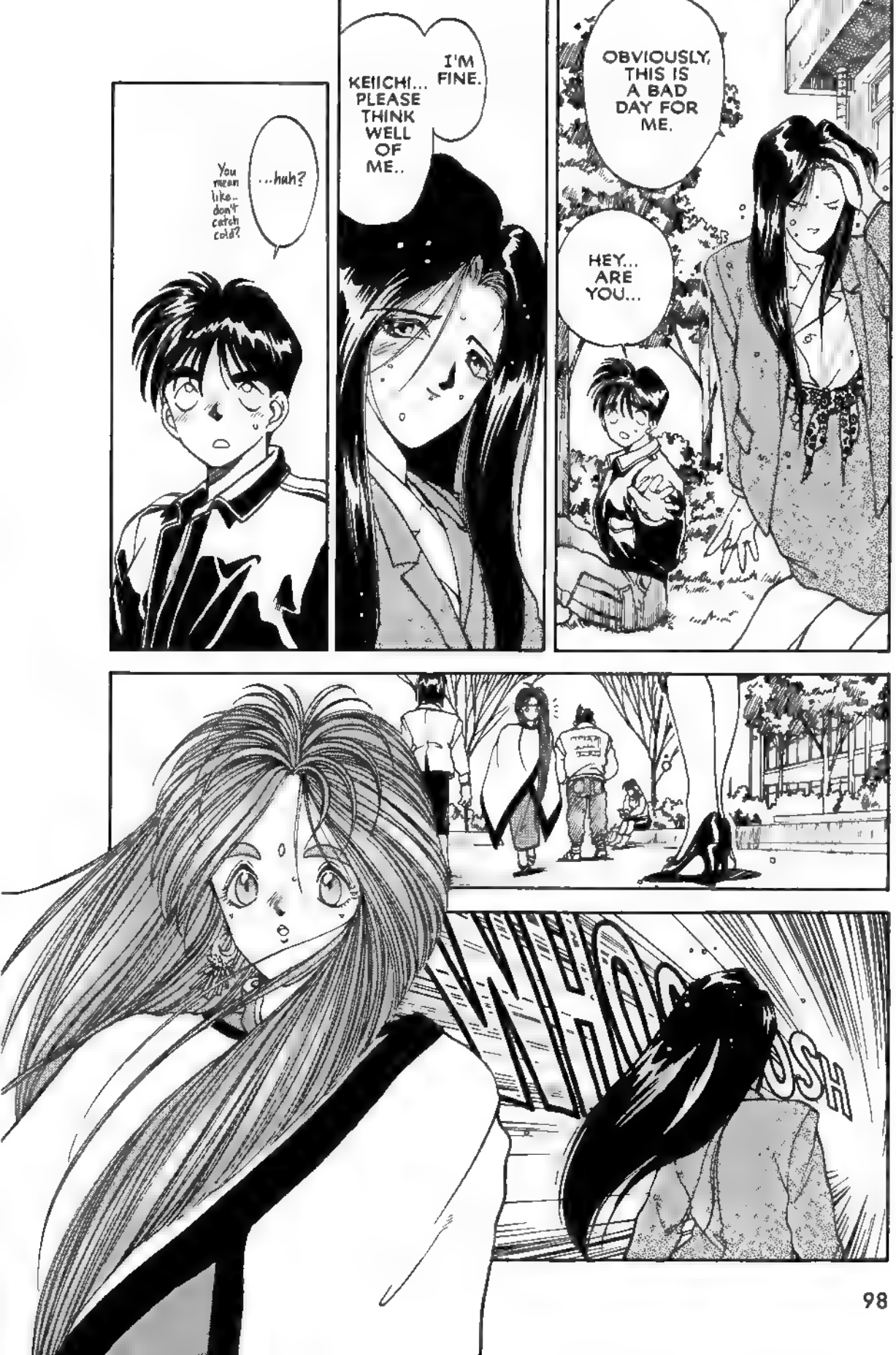
HOWL!
GIBBER!
Yeah!!
DUMP THAT LOSER AND GO OUT WITH ME!
BELL RULES!
♫ GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE! ♫
HMPH! IT'S BEEN LIKE THIS EVER SINCE THIS SHE SHOWED UP! WHO IS THIS MYSTERIOUS PEON THAT THREATENS MY SUPREMACY?
THAT'S STRANGE... HE DOES LOOK LIKE A LOSER...
DON'T ENCOURAGE THEM.
WAIT A MINUTE... I'VE SEEN THAT LOSER BEFORE!
AH, HA.

HEH, HEH, HEH.
...THIS CHANCE IS ALMOST LIKE DIVINE INTERVEN-TION!
HERE YOU ARE.
WOW!
I MADE IT WITH MY HEART.
UM... DID YOU MAKE THIS WITH YOUR... POWER?
PLEASE GO AHEAD AND EAT.
OKAY..
OH, DEAR!
PAGING SOPHOMORE MISS BELLDANDY... PLEASE REPORT TO DR. KAKUTA'S OFFICE.
THANK YOU FOR LUNCH..

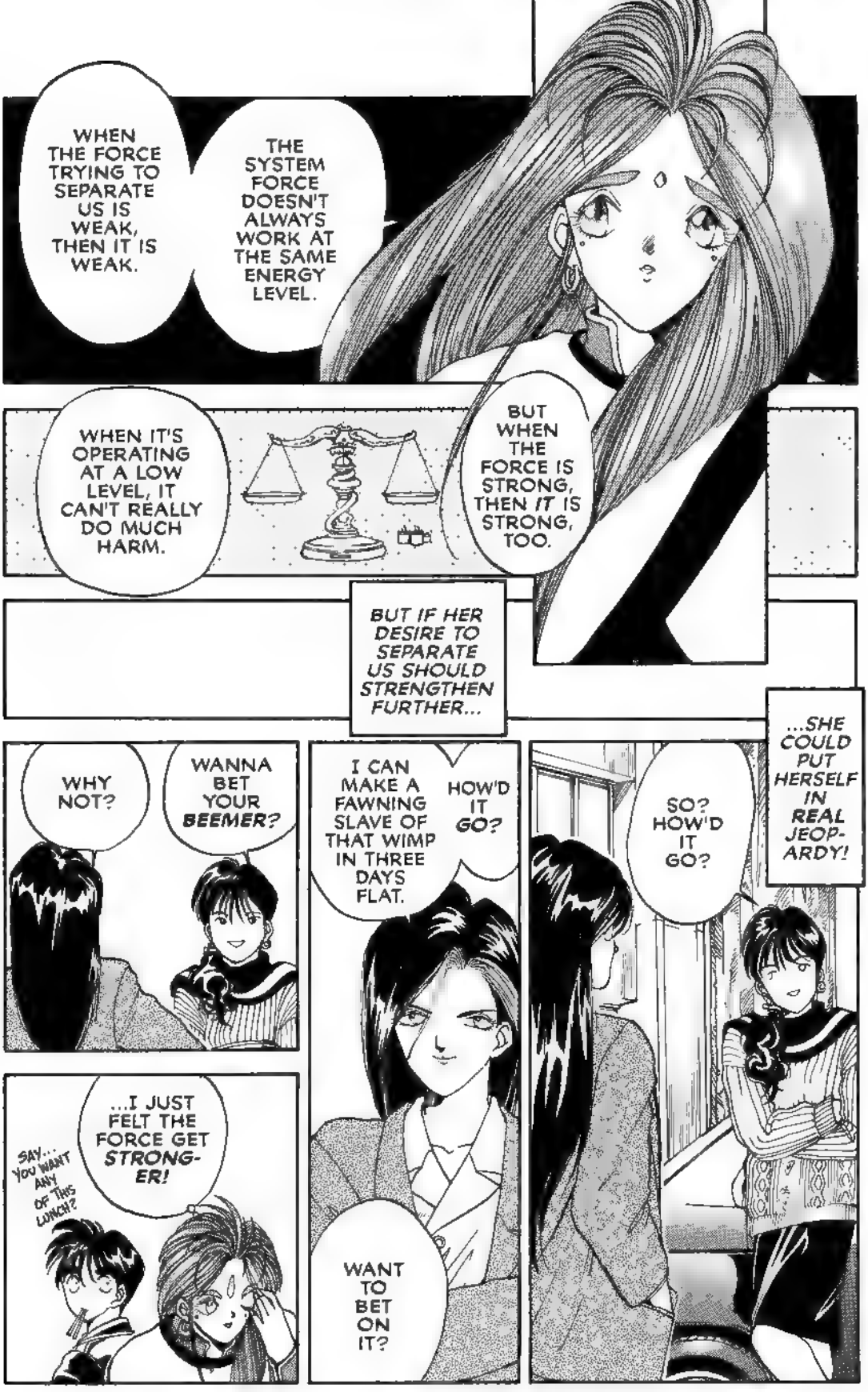
UM. YOU WANNA GO TO A MUSEUM?
N-NOT SINCE LAST TERM...
HEY! LONG TIME NO SEE!
HUH?
AND SHE HASN'T SPOKEN TO ME SINCE.
HUH? MUSEUMS ARE FOR OLD PEOPLE?
MUCH LATER.
DO I LOOK LIKE AN OLD WOMAN?
DOCTOR, YOU DIDN'T HAVE ME PAGED?
"SO WHY NOW ...?"

--I SUDDENLY FEEL...AN EVIL PRESENCE...
OH.
NOPE. FIRST I HEARD OF IT.
HOW VERY ODD. I WONDER WHO--
OTHER MEN HAVE HURT ME...
...OH, KEIICHI, I WAS SO WRONG... OTHER MEN HAVE BETRAYED ME....
...I'VE COME BACK TO YOU... I KNOW I DON'T DESERVE YOU...
I'VE NEVER KNOWN A GUY WHO WOULDN'T FALL FOR THIS CRAP.

n-no. .
OH?
KEIICHI... DO YOU... HATE ME?
OF COURSE. HOW COULD YOU. HOW COULD ANYONE--
I SWEAR! I SWEAR I DON'T HATE YOU!
UH-HUH...
WHOOPS! SORRY! DIDN'T SEE YOU!
OH, YEAH... THE SYSTEM FORCE...
SPLOOSH


OBVIOUSLY, THIS IS A BAD DAY FOR ME.
HEY... ARE YOU...
KEIICHI... PLEASE THINK WELL OF ME..
I'M FINE.
...huh?
You mean like... don't catch cold?
THUMP

WHAT IS IT, BELL-DANDY ...?
I'LL TEAR HIM AWAY FROM YOU. I'LL HUMILIATE YOU. I'LL MAKE YOU LEAVE THIS CAMPUS FOREVER.
WH... WHAT WAS THAT?!
HUH?
THAT WOMAN... IS IN GRAVE DANGER.


WHEN THE FORCE TRYING TO SEPARATE US IS WEAK, THEN IT IS WEAK.
THE SYSTEM FORCE DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK AT THE SAME ENERGY LEVEL.
WHEN IT'S OPERATING AT A LOW LEVEL, IT CAN'T REALLY DO MUCH HARM.
BUT WHEN THE FORCE IS STRONG, THEN *IT* IS STRONG, TOO.
BUT IF HER DESIRE TO SEPARATE US SHOULD STRENGTHEN FURTHER...
WHY NOT?
WANNA BET YOUR *BEEMER?*
...I JUST FELT THE FORCE GET *STRONG-ER!*
SAY... YOU WANT ANY OF THIS LUNCH?
I CAN MAKE A FAWNING SLAVE OF THAT WIMP IN THREE DAYS FLAT.
HOW'D IT *GO?*
WANT TO BET ON IT?
SO? HOW'D IT GO?
...SHE COULD PUT HERSELF IN REAL JEOP-ARDY!

WHOA! A 535i!
WANT A RIDE...?
FROM THAT DAY ON, SAYOKO'S ASSAULT... WAS RELENT-LESS.
honk honk

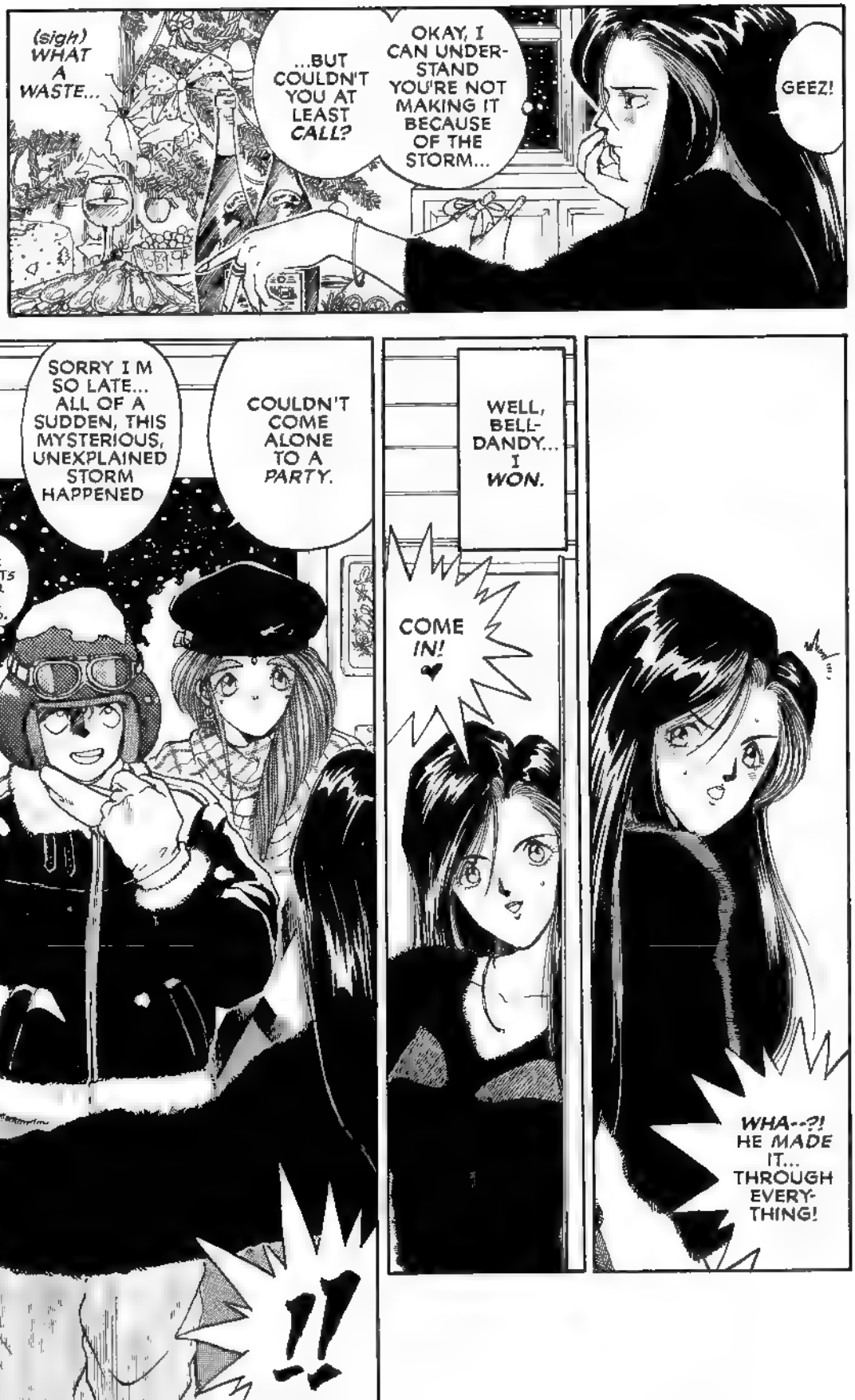
HMM.... PROBABLY, AS LONG AS SHE DOESN'T--
psst YOU THINK IT'LL BE OKAY IF WE...?

PLR SHHH
UH-OH.
I MEANT JUST YOU, KEIICHI.

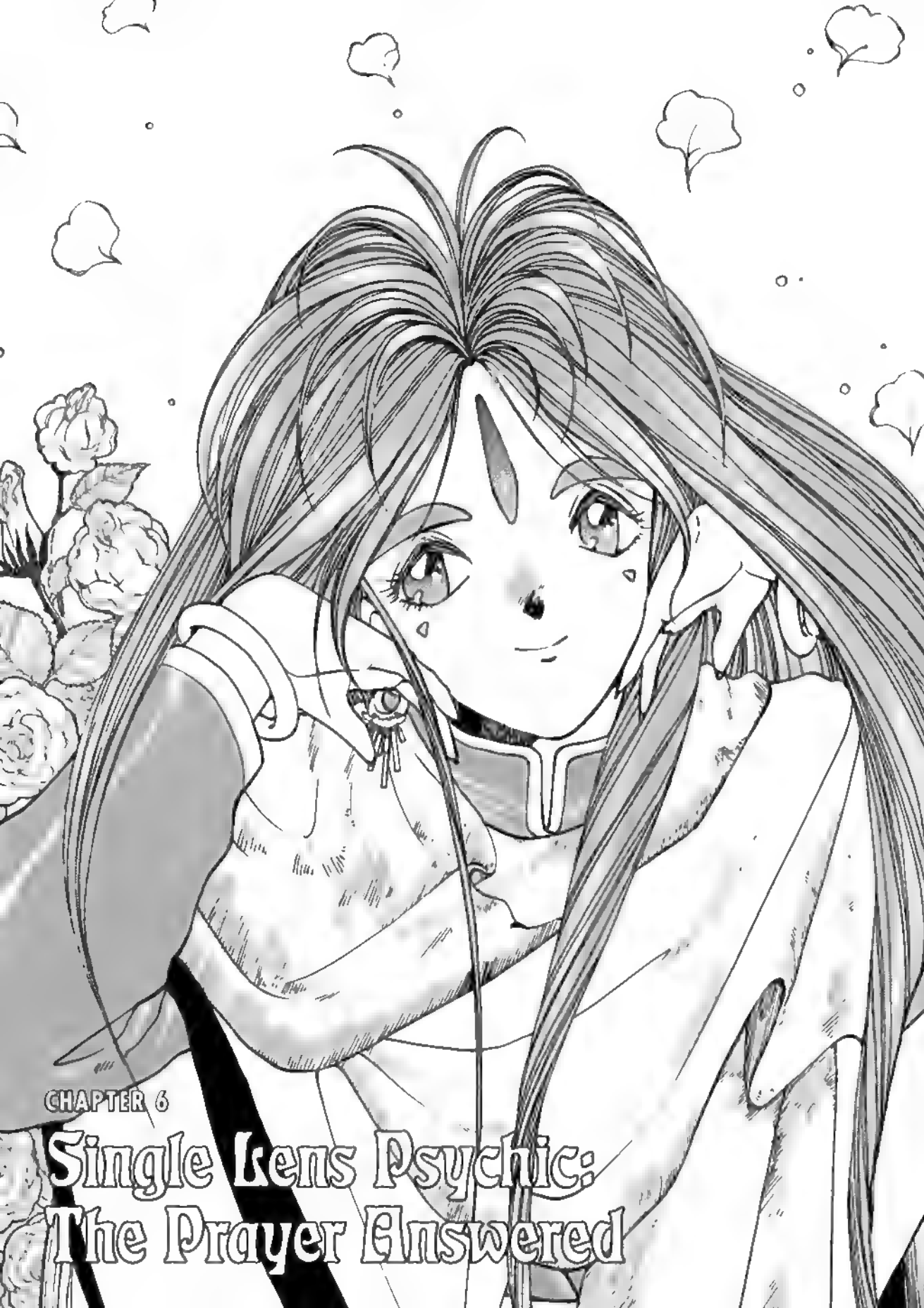
BOMF!
Poof
ENERGY SHIELD!
WHAT THE-- IT'S OVER-HEATING!
...ALL BELL-DANDY COULD DO WAS WEAKEN ITS EFFECT.
HM?
...WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
...JUST IN TIME.
SIGH
SAY...
THE FORCE WAS MORE POWER-FUL THAN EXPECT-ED...
STOP! DON'T!
KEIICHI... WANT TO GO TO DINNER? MY TREAT!
BUT SAYOKO... DIDN'T KNOW WHEN TO GIVE UP.

HERE. THIS IS FOR YOU, KEIICHI.
UH... what?
NO! I'LL BE MAULED! SAVAGED!
GRRRRR
LUCKILY FOR HER...
HEY! MY WAL-LET!
...BELL-DANDY WAS AROUND TO SHOW MERCY.
FWHSHH
EEK!
PLEASE, OH PLEASE, WON'T YOU COME.
MY PARENTS ARE AWAY... BUT I HOPE YOU'LL BE THERE.
I'M HAVING A LITTLE PARTY TOMOR-ROW EVENING ...?
B-BUT, SAYOKO... BE CAREFUL! IF YOU INVITE ME TO BE WITH YOU, THEN--
HERE'S A MAP

...
THIP
Flap Flap
SOME-THING BAD WILL HAPPEN.
S--
flip
ENTIRE KANTO REGION HAS BEEN BLANKETED WITH MORE THAN 50cm OF SNOW.
FMPP
SSSHHHH
ALL RESI-DENTS ARE ADVISED NOT TO TRAVEL--
klik
THIS RECORD-BREAKING STORM HAS PARALYZED BOTH ROAD AND RAIL TRAFFIC--


(sigh) WHAT A WASTE...
...BUT COULDN'T YOU AT LEAST CALL?
OKAY, I CAN UNDER-STAND YOU'RE NOT MAKING IT BECAUSE OF THE STORM...
GEEZ!
WELL, BELL-DANDY... I WON.
COME IN! ❤
WHA--?! HE MADE IT... THROUGH EVERY-THING!
SORRY I M SO LATE... ALL OF A SUDDEN, THIS MYSTERIOUS, UNEXPLAINED STORM HAPPENED
COULDN'T COME ALONE TO A PARTY.
HOW COULD I EXPLAIN ITS ALL YOUR FAULT, SAYOKO.
!!

I GIVE UP, BELL-DANDY...
THAT'S WEIRD. THE SNOW JUST STOPPED
COME ON-- YOU EXPECT ME TO EAT THIS WHOLE THING BY MYSELF?
SURELY YOU CAN STAY FOR A FEW MINUTES ...?
SEE YOU LATER!
I'M BEGIN-NING TO THINK YOU TWO ARE OUT OF MY LEAGUE.
WAIT A MINUTE!
YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY FOR THAT?
BUT WE CAN'T STAY, SO BELLDANDY MADE YOU THIS CAKE TO DROP OFF.
BUT... BUT...
IT'S ALL YOURS, HONEY. SORRY THE ENGINE MELTED.
...FOR TODAY, ANY-WAY.



CHAPTER 6

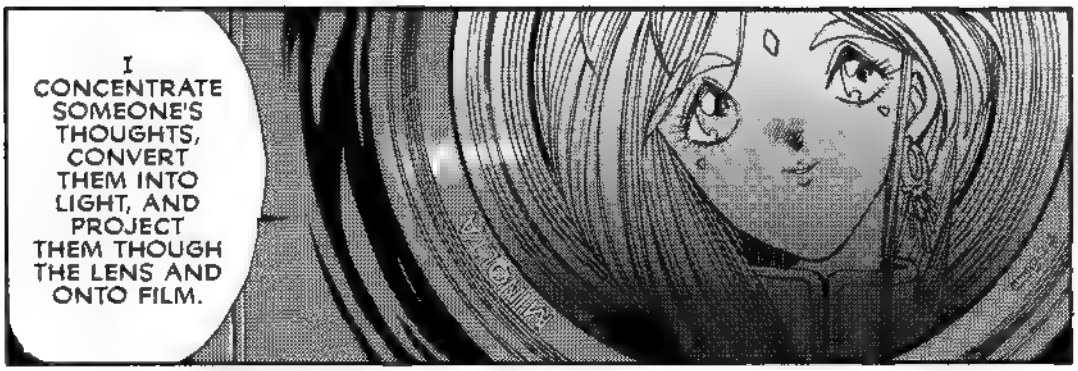
Single Lens Psychic: The Prayer Answered

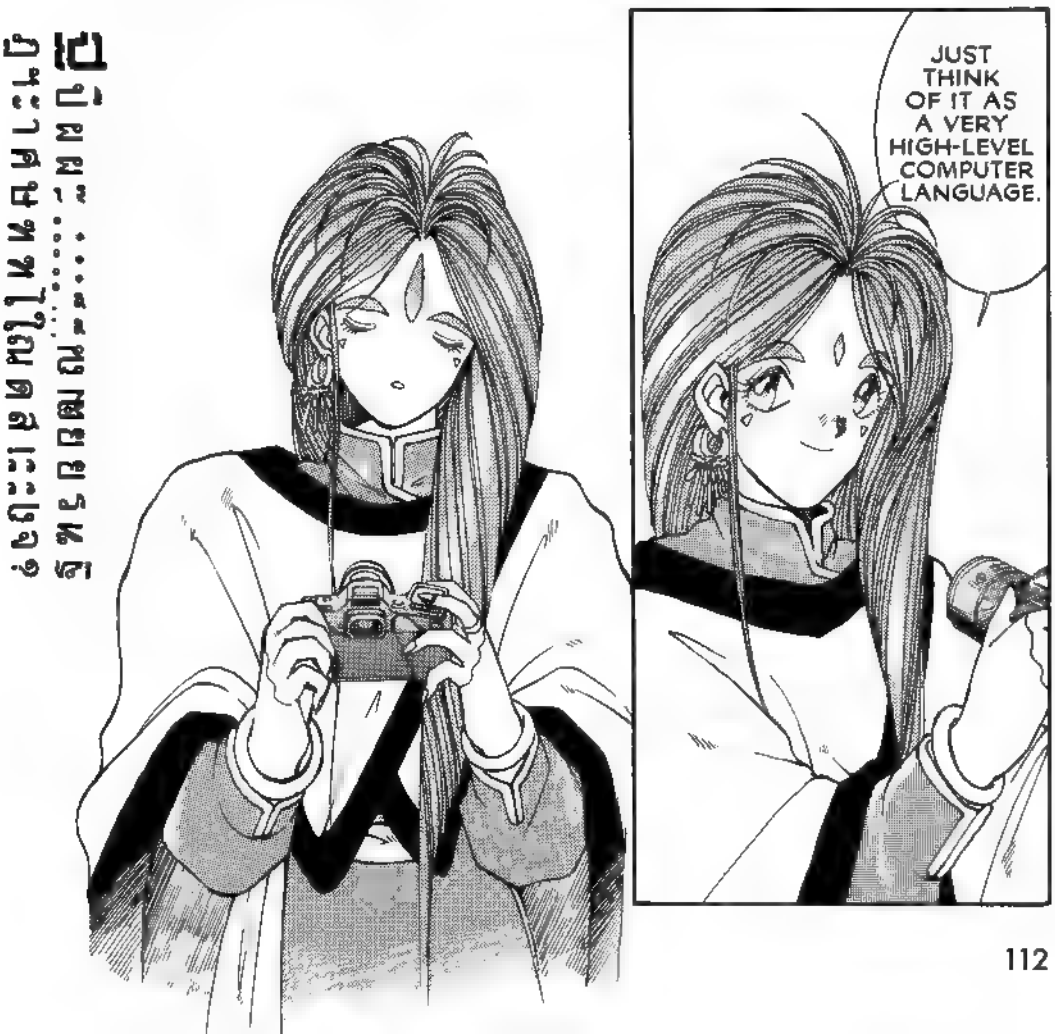
I'M SURE I WILL, BELL-DANDY, BUT...
PLEASE... ENJOY!
...BUT THERE'S JUST SO MUCH OF IT!
AW, DON'T WORRY, BELL! I'LL EAT IT ALL! I SWEAR!
...AND I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY.
YOU SAID MY LAST LUNCH WAS SO DELI-CIOUS...YOU WANTED ME TO MAKE YOU ANOTH-ER...
I'M SO SORRY.

YO! NOW, DON'T THAT LOOK TASTY!
THANKS! DON'T MIND IF I DO!
MNCH
GULP
SCARF
ER.... IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN US, PLEASE--
'TAIN'T FAIR!
LUCKY GUY!

NOTHING BUT SCRAPS!
REAL GOOD EATS!
THANKS FOR LUNCH.
A BEAUTIFUL BABE ALWAYS AT YOUR SIDE... MAKIN' YA GRUB... YEAH... LUCKY GUY.
YEAH, YOU GOT IT NICE, MORI-SATO.
GOOD... YEAH...
HMM. THAT PER-SON...
...HE'S IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE!
WHAT?! B-BUT... OTAKI'S ALWAYS BEEN TOO SHY TO EVEN TALK TO A GIRL!
BESIDES, THEY ALL THINK HE'S THE WEIRDEST GUY IN SCHOOL!
and that's saying something!
SAVE US! IT'S A SIGN OF THE END TIMES!

WAIT... LET'S FIND OUT WHO IT IS!
第60号館
IT'S A SINGLE-LENS PSYCHIC CAMERA!
YES, HOW DID YOU KNOW?
風林火山
KAGUTA'S LAB
KNOCK!
HUH... SO YOU'RE GONNA PHOTO-GRAPH WHO'S ON HIS MIND?
FOLLOW OTAKI AROUND WITH THAT. .?





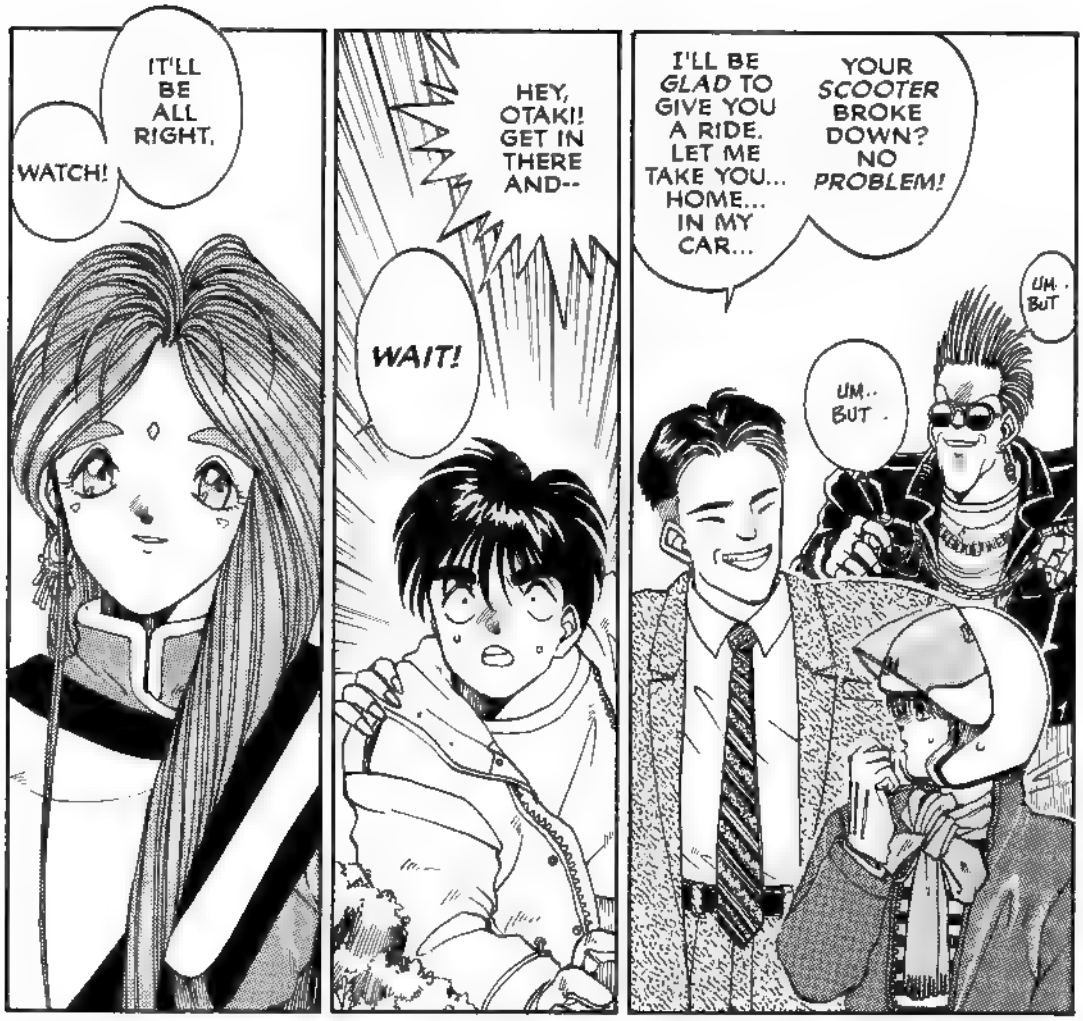
*EACH PULSE-CODE MODULATION EQUALS 5 000 WORDS!

IT DOES KINDA RATTLE AROUND IN YOUR HEAD, DOESN'T IT?
?
I ALWAYS KNEW HIS BRAIN WAS STRANGE, BUT LOOK AT WHAT S ON HIS MIND!
GEEZ.. WEIRD!
HEY?! WE ACTUALLY GOT SOME-THING!

...BUT SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANYONE SHE'S SERIOUS ABOUT.
THAT'S *HER*-- *SATOKO YAMANO!* SHE'S A FRESHMAN IN ELECTRONICS. THE UPPERCLASSMEN ARE ALL OVER HER BECAUSE SHE SEEMS SO SWEET AND INNOCENT. .
GOTTA BE ONE OF THE TOP FIVE BABES ON CAMPUS...
WAIT A SEC! *HERE WE GO!!*
WELL, OTAKI'S GOT GOOD *TASTE*, ANYWAY.
NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHO SHE IS...
...WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

SO...
...CAN YOU LEND ME SOME OF YOUR POWER, BELLDANDY?
WELL... THE TRUTH IS IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS...
...HEY!
MORISATO- ONE LAST THING!
I FIXED YER BIKE DUDE!
BUT I GUESS I SORT OF OWE THE GUY...
FWIP
And
AAH... IT'S HER!
KRIK VREE VREE
Oh Infernal Fires! Burn Thou Over High...

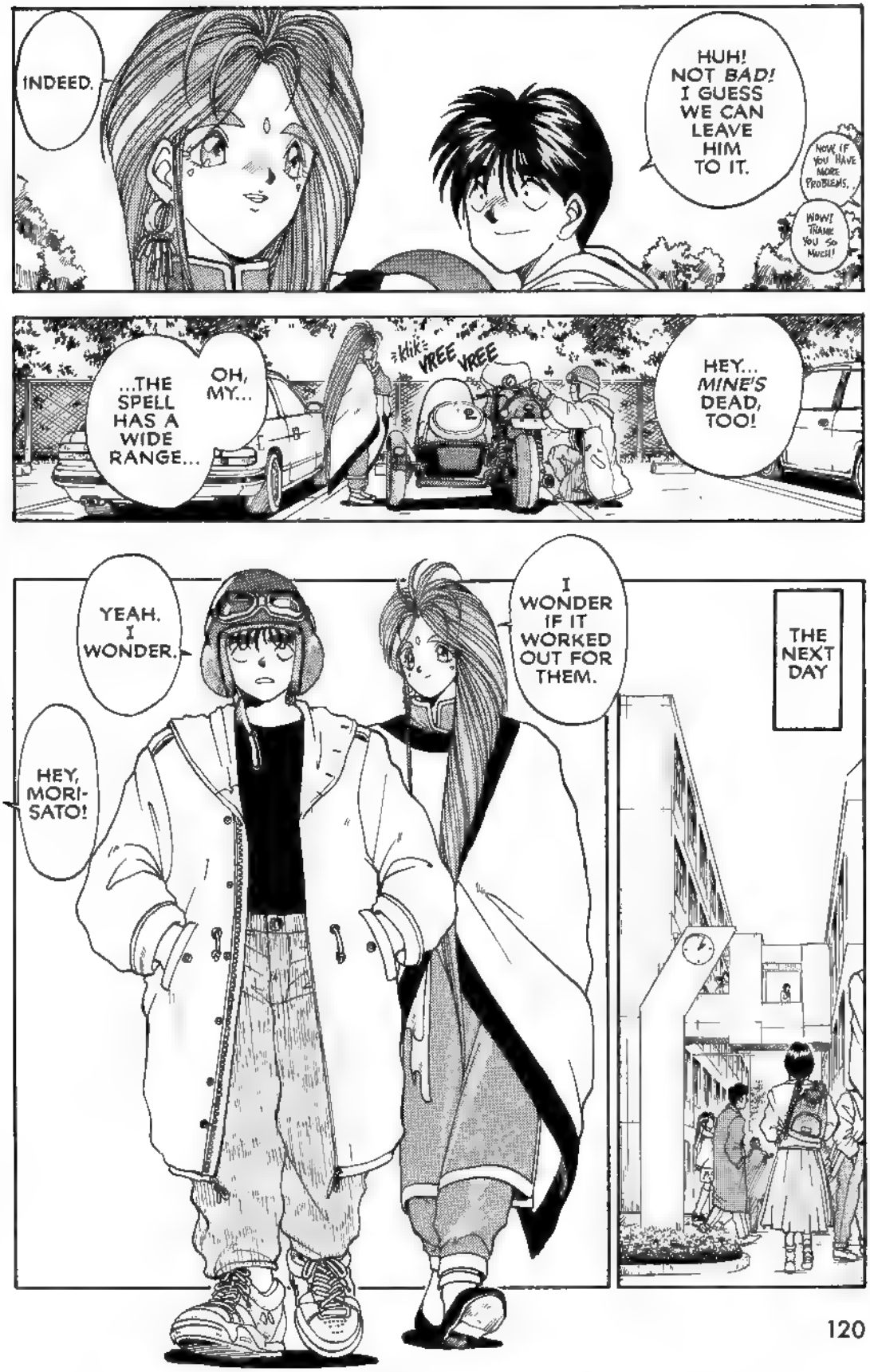
Be Ye Now Still, Your Lifeflame Banked in Restful Sleep!
BKAM
HUH ...?
NOW'S MY CHANCE!
FLOODED THE ENGINE?
WHOA?
?? I DON'T UNDER-STAND... WHY WON'T IT START?
Ami
KLIK VREE VREE
SOME-THING WRONG, MY DEAR?
EXCU--


IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
WATCH!
HEY, OTAKI! GET IN THERE AND--
WAIT!
YOUR SCOOTER BROKE DOWN? NO PROBLEM!
I'LL BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU A RIDE. LET ME TAKE YOU... HOME... IN MY CAR...
UM.. BUT
UM.. BUT

SHE DON'T NEED ANYTHING FROM YOU.
ahem JUST A MINUTE, BUDDY!

'CAUSE I CAN ASSURE YOU...I'VE GOT THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB.
Um
Uh..
BEHOLD!
KUNG!
....?
FWMP

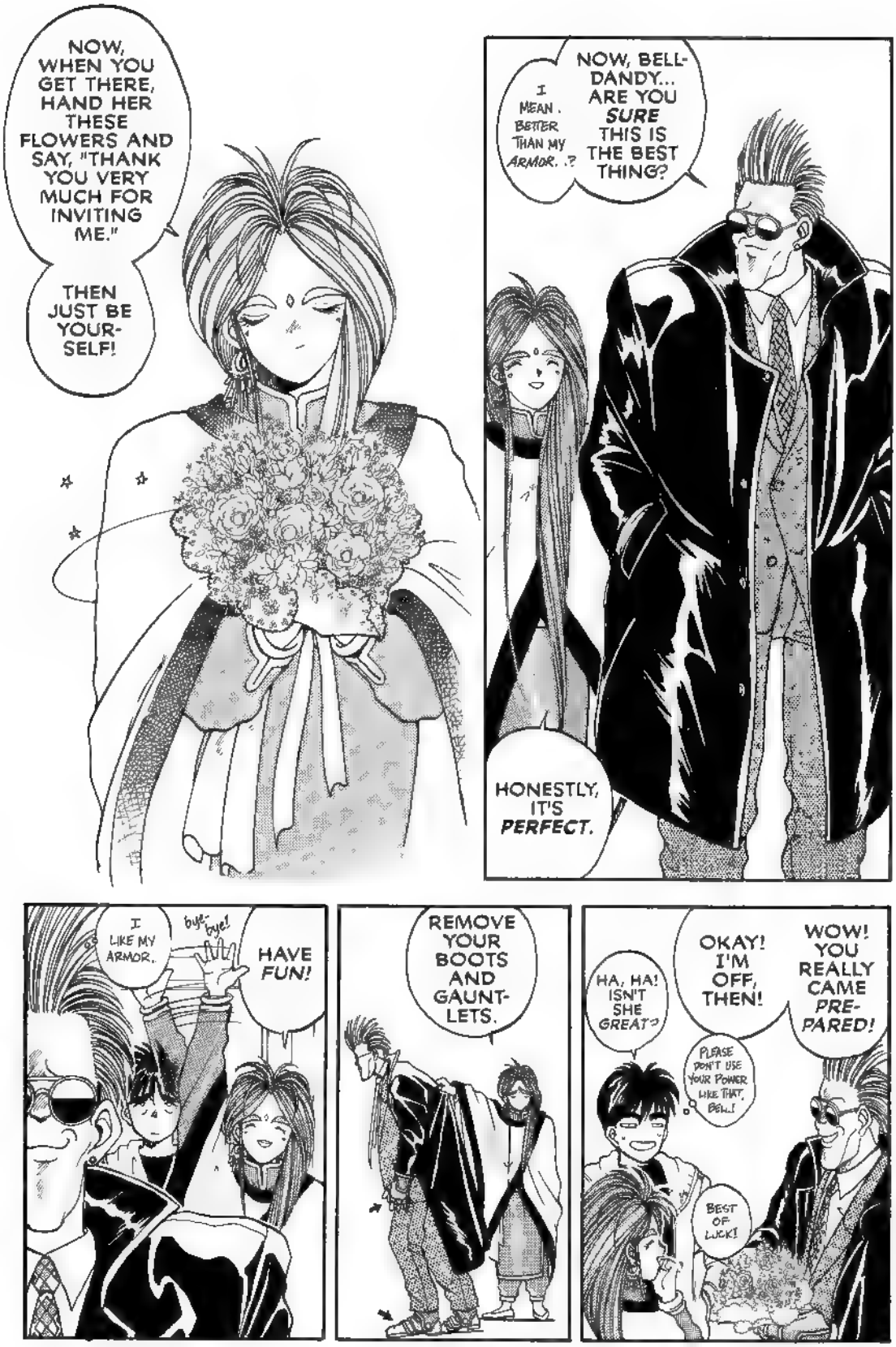
I THINK I CAN BALLPARK THE GAP, AND IT'LL GET YOU HOME.
IT AIN'T AN *EXACT* REPLACE-MENT, BUT..
chik chik
AH, *HAH!* YOUR SPARK PLUG IS FRIED.
SEE THAT PITTING?
HOW WONDER-FUL!
JUST DON'T PUSH THE ENGINE ON THE WAY AND YOU'LL BE FINE.
I...I'M HOPELESS WITH HARDWARE.
YOU'RE... MR. *OTAKI*, AREN'T YOU? THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I'M NO GOOD WITH SOFTWARE, SO I GUESS WE'RE EVEN.
WELL...


INDEED.
HUH! NOT BAD! I GUESS WE CAN LEAVE HIM TO IT.
NOW IF YOU HAVE MORE PROBLEMS,
WOW! THANK YOU SO MUCH!
...THE SPELL HAS A WIDE RANGE...
OH, MY...
klik
VREE
VREE
HEY... MINE'S DEAD, TOO!
YEAH. I WONDER.
I WONDER IF IT WORKED OUT FOR THEM.
HEY, MORI-SATO!
THE NEXT DAY

NO WAY! SHE INVITED YOU HOME FOR DINNER *ALREADY?!*
YOU GOT A SEC...?
YEAH.. SURE
YEAH.
BUT THAT'S *GREAT,* OTAKI! YOU'RE MAKING PROGRESS!
COULD YOU COME BY THE DORM... GIVE ME SOME ADVICE?
BUT, ACTUALLY, I'M...er... NOT USED TO THIS STUFF.

HMM. "NOBLE AND ELEGANT"... "LIKE A KNIGHT"... OKAY, HOLD ON A SEC.
NOBLE AND ELEGANT...
...A VALIANT IMAGE, LIKE A LATTER-DAY KNIGHT.
FIRST, YOU MUST STRIVE TO PRESENT A SHINING APPEAR-ANCE.
HE KEEPS ALL HIS GEAR IN THE OTHER ROOM.
WHERE DID HE GO...?
YO!

YEAH! HARK! HARK TO MY COOLNESS!
or is that "harken"?
OR IS THAT "HARK"?
OR THIS"
OH, YES I CAN TELL
IS HE REALLY TALKING TO ME SERIOUSLY?
THEN HOW 'BOUT THIS?
WELL
THAT'S VERY IMPRESSIVE
BUT PERHAPS A BIT STRONG


NOW, WHEN YOU GET THERE, HAND HER THESE FLOWERS AND SAY, "THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING ME."
THEN JUST BE YOUR-SELF!
NOW, BELL-DANDY... ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE BEST THING?
I MEAN. BETTER THAN MY ARMOR..?
HONESTLY, IT'S PERFECT.
I LIKE MY ARMOR.
bye-bye!
HAVE FUN!
REMOVE YOUR BOOTS AND GAUNT-LETS.
HA, HA! ISN'T SHE GREAT?
OKAY! I'M OFF, THEN!
WOW! YOU REALLY CAME PRE-PARED!
PLEASE DON'T USE YOUR POWER LIKE THAT, BELL!
BEST OF LUCK!

YUH SCOFF-LAW!
NO, TAMIYA, W-WAIT! OTAKI NEEDED--
WAIT...IF I RECALL... AREN'T FEMALES FORBIDDEN IN YOUR DORM?
UH-OH!
MO-RI-SA-TO!!
AIEEE!
ONE...!
TWO...!
OKAY, GUYS! TIME TA PLAY... TOSS DA SHRIMP!
COM-ING!
Ding-Dong
HELLO ...?

um... "THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
er... FOR INVITING ME."
HUH? HER VOICE... DEEP... ROUGH... ALMOST UGLY! SORE THROAT? LARYNGITIS?
WELL, AREN'T YOU A POLITE YOUNG MAN.
KINDA A WOLF'S GROWL...
!!
OH... IT'S HER DAD.

OOF!
WHOOSH
THMP
HOW'S IT GOING?
WELL, HE'S BEING *HIMSELF*, THAT'S FOR SURE...
NO BUTS! I DIDN'T RAISE YOU TO SPEND TIME ASSOCIATING WITH...WITH SOME *BLUE COLLAR TYPE!*
BUT, FATHER...
I JUST ASKED HIM WHAT HIS HOBBY WAS, AND HE SAID *WELDING!*
味
SATOKO!! I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU SEE IN THIS FELLOW!

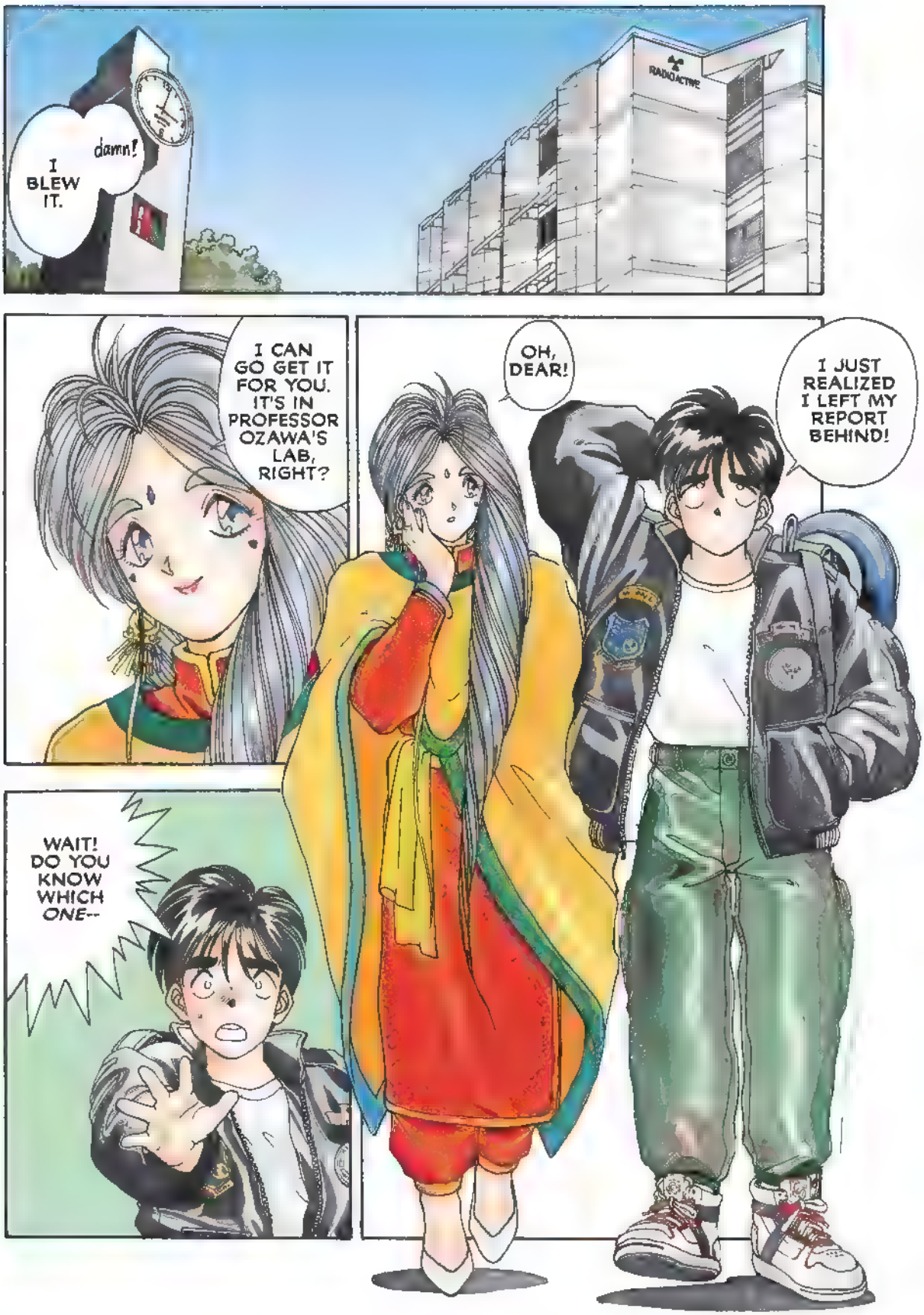
?
FATHER, PLEASE! YOU--
WHAT?! HOW DARE YOU LECTURE ME?!
...WELL, PERHAPS INAPPRO-PRIATE.
FORGIVE MY IMPERTINENCE, MR. YAMANO, BUT JUDGING SOMEONE'S CHARACTER ON THEIR HOBBY SEEMS...
OH, NO! THE OIL'S ON FIRE!
NO! THERE'S ANOTHER WAY!
PUT IT OUT QUICK!
BELL-DANDY! USE YOUR POW-ERS!

WAIT! DON'T USE WATER!
EEK!
FWMP
Dance Thee Oh Spirits of the Flame! Your Power Do I Now Unleash...
OH DEAR.. THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LITTLE CLOSE
SSSSHAAAAH

HMM...THERE I STOOD WHILE MY DAUGHTER WAS IN PERIL, WHILE THIS BRAVE AND RESOURCEFUL YOUNG MAN...
TREAT HER WELL!
YES, I CAN ALLOW MY DAUGHTER TO BE YOUR BRIDE WITHOUT FEAR.
FORGIVE ME, SON! I NOW SEE THAT YOU'RE A TRUE MAN... VALIANT...A LATTER-DAY KNIGHT.
NOW WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?!
MORI-SATO! YOU GOTTA HELP ME!!
I'VE HELPED YOU ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY.
B-BUT, DAD! I MEAN, SIR! I MEAN... I DIDN'T MEAN...
"BRIDE" ...?!
OH, I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU, OTAKI!
B-B-BRIDE ?!
OH, FATHER !!

CHAPTER 7

Lullaby of Love

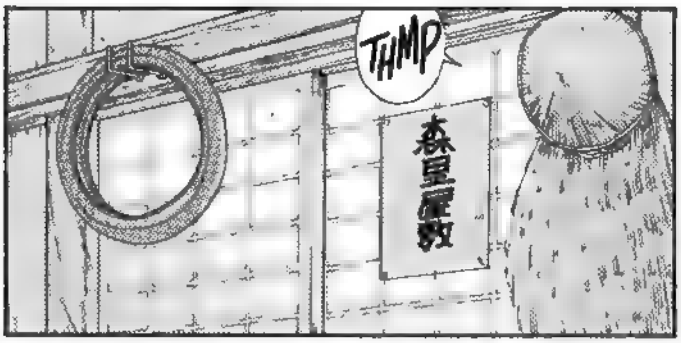

I BLEW IT.
damn!
RADIOACTIVE
I CAN GO GET IT FOR YOU. IT'S IN PROFESSOR OZAWA'S LAB, RIGHT?
OH, DEAR!
I JUST REALIZED I LEFT MY REPORT BEHIND!
WAIT! DO YOU KNOW WHICH ONE--

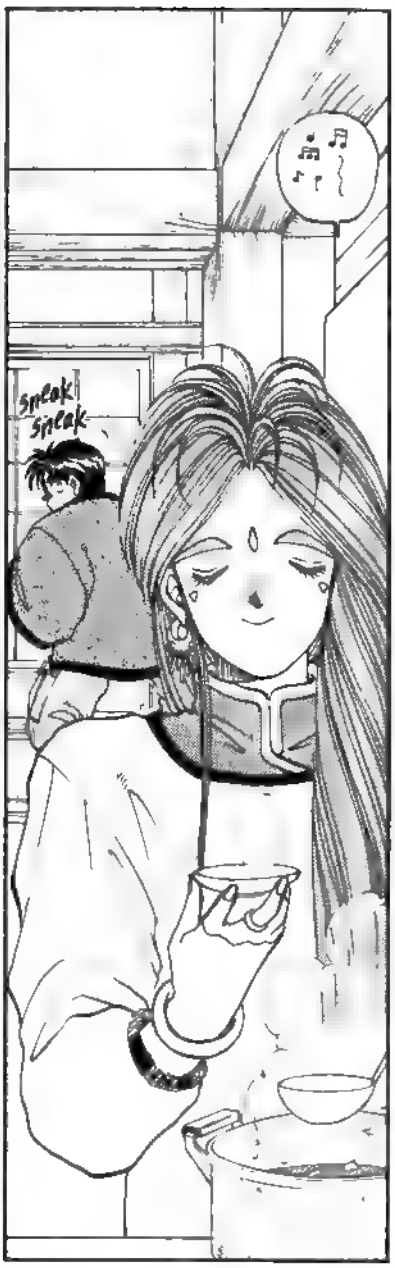
...SHE'LL JUST POP RIGHT BACK.
AH, WELL. WHATEVER. IF SHE CAN'T FIND IT...
HEY, *BITE ME.* I'M NOT A LOSER LIKE *YOU* GUYS!
WHAT'S *UP,* MORISATO? SHE DUMP YOU ALREADY?
...THE CONFIDENCE OF YOUR PEERS...
IT'S REAL NICE...
HAD A FIGHT, HUH? THAT'S TRAGIC.
OH, *NO!* DON'T TELL ME YOU... YOU... *BROKE UP?!*

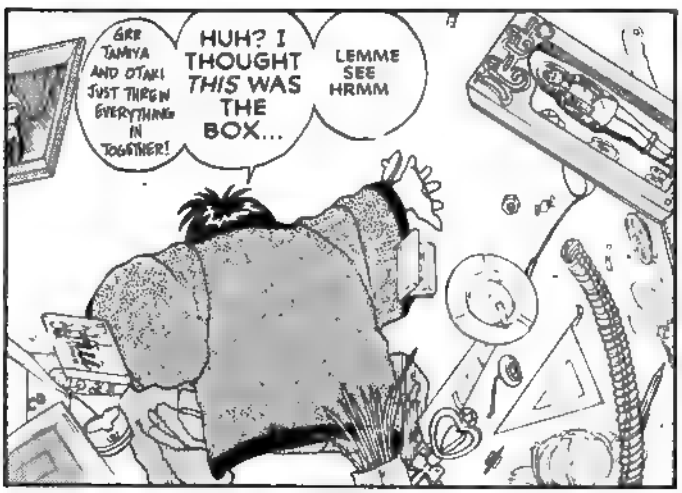
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE PEOPLE TEND TO REALLY NOTICE HER.
SO WHENEVER WE'RE NOT TOGETHER, I LOOK EVEN MORE ALONE.
HUH ?!
WAIT A MINUTE...
WE ARE TOGETHER ALL THE TIME...BUT NOTHING EVER HAPPENS WITH US!
I'M BACK.
YIKES!

OH, WAIT... I GENERATED A GRAVITATIONAL INTERRUPTION FIELD AROUND MY HANDS.
OTHERWISE, THEY'RE RATHER HEAVY
yeah, right!
...I BROUGHT IT ALL.
HERE
NOW, I DIDN'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEEDED, SO...
YES!
TH-TH-THAT WAS FAST!
WHOA!
BRMOOB
AH, HOME AT LAST!
...NOW I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND.

SO... GO FOR IT!
C'MON, KEIICHI! YEAH, SHE'S A GODDESS, BUT SHE'S ALSO A WOMAN... IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE!


THMP
森里屋敷


Sneak Sneak


GRR TAMIYA AND OTAKI JUST THREW EVERYTHING IN TOGETHER!
HUH? I THOUGHT THIS WAS THE BOX...
LEMME SEE HRMM

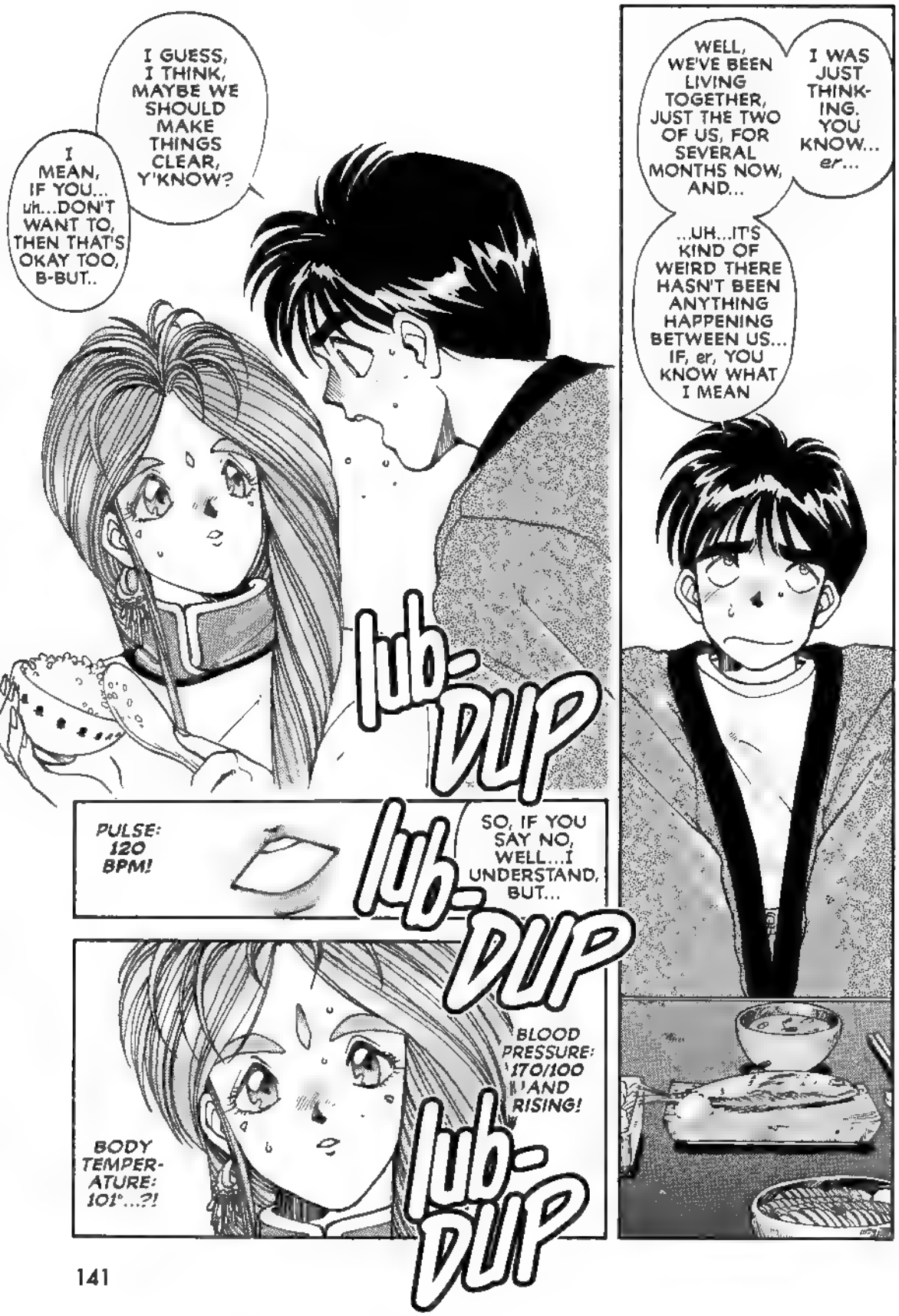
AH, HA! THERE IT IS!

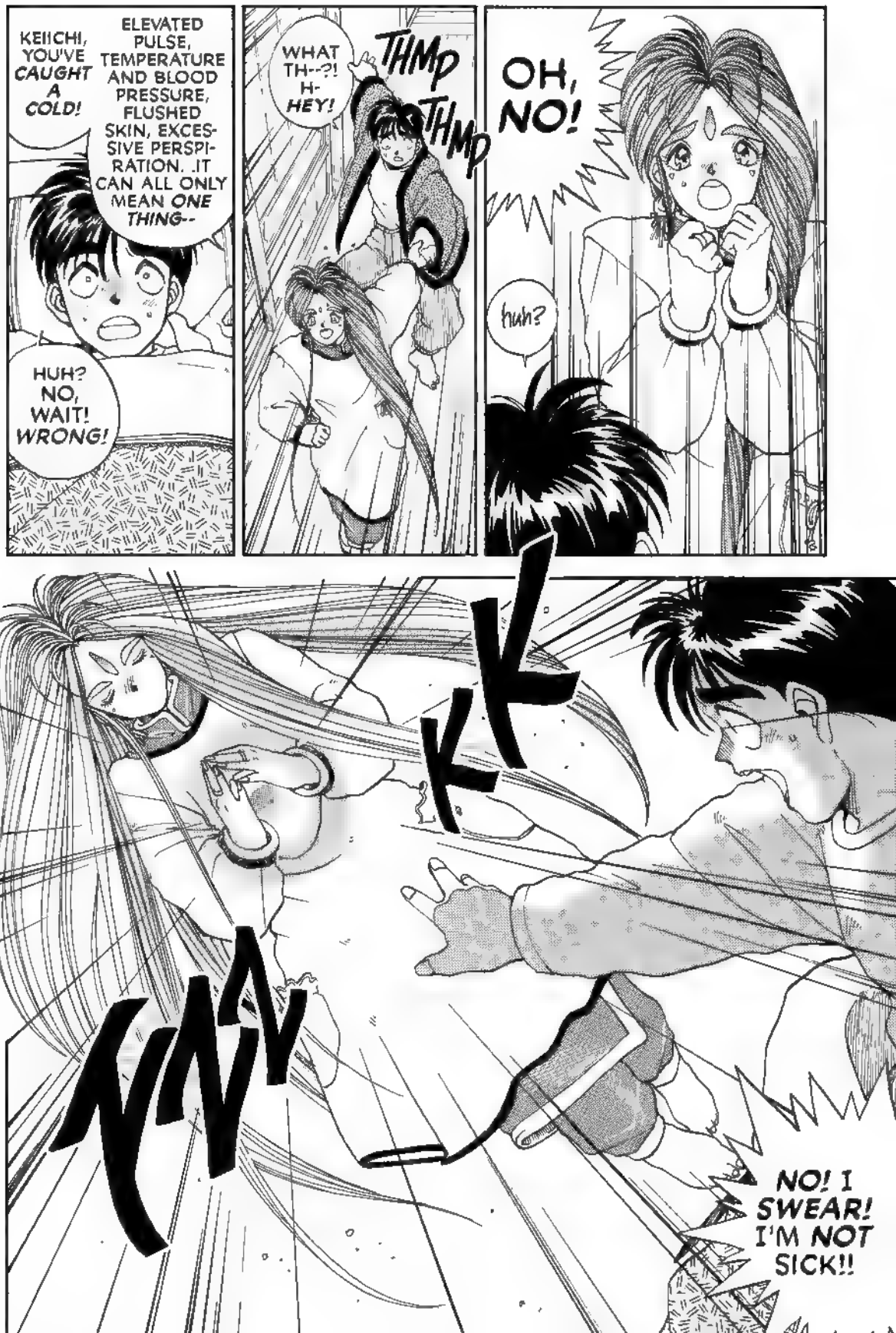
GOING STEADY FOR DUMMIES
What does it mean to "go steady"? Read this book and learn all the tricks and traps!
Finally! You, too, can have a girlfriend! Yes--YOU!
SPECIAL BONUS CHAPTER FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS
AS LONG AS I HAVE THIS, I CANNOT FAIL!!
THE ULTIMATE "HOW TO DATE" BOOK!
I GOT IT TWO YEARS AGO .. ON SALE.
WELL.. MAYBE.
...I MIGHT... BE ABLE... TO KISS HER!
WITH THIS... JUST MAYBE...
SETTING THE SOUNDS OF LOVE
UH, OH.
"MOOD MUSIC," HUH?! LEMME SEE ..
"THE PRIVATE DINNER: MOOD MUSIC--"...
FORGET THAT. NO CASH
OKAY! HMM... "CHOOSE A RESTAURANT WITH FANTASTIC NIGHT-TIME VIEWS, AND--"

HEY ...?
--THIS IS THE MOST UNRO-MANTIC MUSIC COLLECTION I'VE EVER SEEN!!!
VAN HALEN...
DAVID LEE ROTH...
HIROKO KASAWARA...
SUDARA BUSHI...
GREAT MILITARY MARCH-ES...
Q-TARO THE GHOST--
HA! GEORGE WINSTON! TAPED IT OFF THE RADIO-- FOR FREE!
HERE WE GO!!
KEIICHI, DEAR... DINNER'S READY.
HEH, HEH, HEH... WITH THIS, SHE'LL FALL INTO MY ARMS!

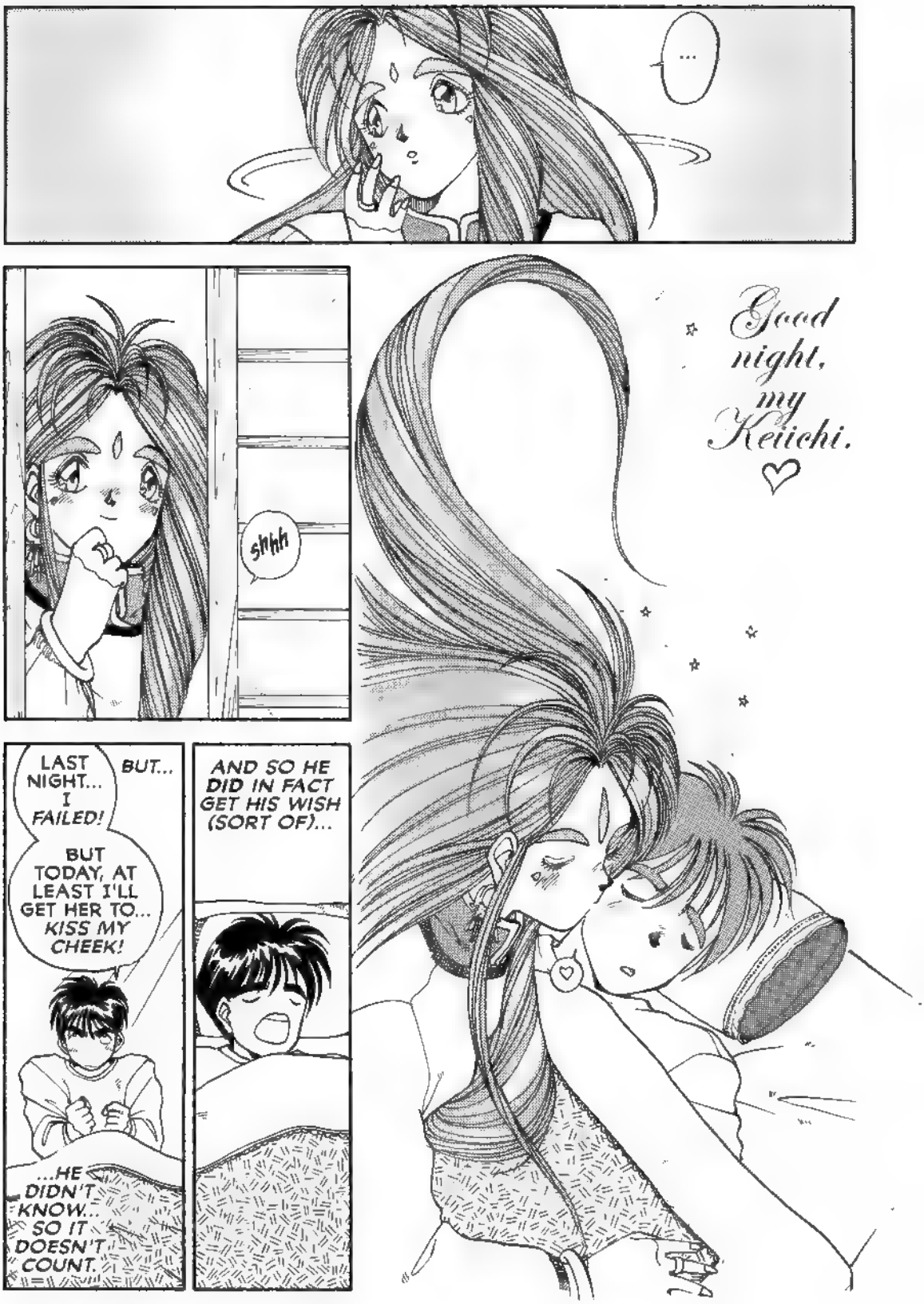
I'M TRYING TO CONSERVE MY ENERGY RIGHT NOW SO I CAN ONLY SEE FEELINGS AS DIFFERENT COLORS AND WHEN I'M NOT CONCEN TRATING
I DON'T SEE THEM AT ALL
YELLOW HAPPY
BLUE SA
GRAY
PINK
RED ANGRY
OF COURSE
COULD YOU READ MY MIND JUST NOW?
BELL-DANDY
I MEAN I COULD BUT
MY PLANS RUINED!
MY POWERS ARE SEVERELY RESTRICTED
I THINK I MENTIONED IT BEFORE BUT AS LONG AS I'M NOT ACTIVELY FUNCTIONING AS AN ANTENNA
HMM HE'S EMITTING A YELLOW AURA I WONDER IF SOMETHING GOOD HAPPENED TO HIM TODAY
GREAT! LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD
KUK

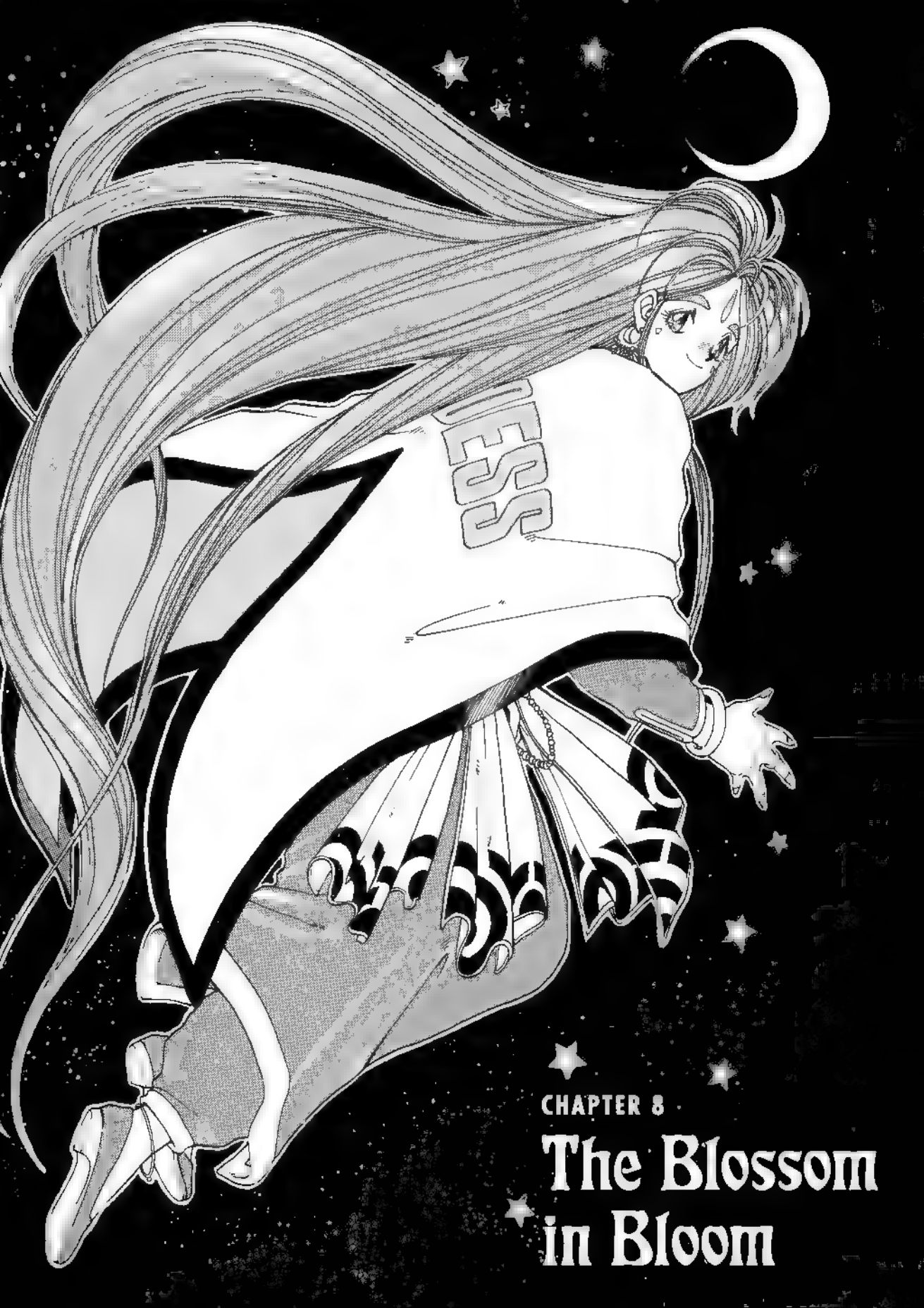
--YOU MORON!
...I FORGOT THE HEAD-PHONES.
OH, YEAH. SILLY ME...
THERE WE GO--
(SILENCE)
THAT'S WEIRD... I DON'T HEAR ANY-THING.
OKAY, PIANO MAN... DO YOUR THING!
FFFF
BOUGHT FOR ¥16800 WORTH ¥24800
I'M NOT TRYING TO SEDUCE MYSELF! 16800 YEN WILL NOT BUY ME LOVE!
maybe we could share the headphones?
YES?
ER... BELL-DANDY?
WAIT! I DON'T NEED A FANCY SOUND SYSTEM! MY HEART-FELT WORDS ARE PRICELESS! OR AT LEAST WORTH 16800 YEN!


I WAS JUST THINK-ING. YOU KNOW... er...
WELL, WE'VE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER, JUST THE TWO OF US, FOR SEVERAL MONTHS NOW, AND...
...UH...IT'S KIND OF WEIRD THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYTHING HAPPENING BETWEEN US... IF, er, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN
I GUESS, I THINK, MAYBE WE SHOULD MAKE THINGS CLEAR, Y'KNOW?
I MEAN, IF YOU... uh...DON'T WANT TO, THEN THAT'S OKAY TOO, B-BUT..
lub-DUP
SO, IF YOU SAY NO, WELL...I UNDERSTAND, BUT...
PULSE: 120 BPM!
lub-DUP
BLOOD PRESSURE: 170/100 AND RISING!
BODY TEMPER-ATURE: 101°...?!
lub-DUP


KEIICHI, YOU'VE CAUGHT A COLD!
ELEVATED PULSE, TEMPERATURE AND BLOOD PRESSURE, FLUSHED SKIN, EXCESSIVE PERSPIRATION. IT CAN ALL ONLY MEAN ONE THING--
HUH? NO, WAIT! WRONG!
WHAT TH--?! H-HEY!
THMP THMP
OH, NO!
huh?
KK
KNY
NO! I SWEAR! I'M NOT SICK!!

MUSTN'T... GIVE UP ATTEMPT... TO SCORE...
FEZZZKKKK
AND SO, BELL-DANDY BROUGHT DOWN THE POWERS OF HEAVEN TO HEAL KEIICHI
..WHILE KEIICHI FOUGHT BACK DESPERATELY TO PRESERVE HIS LUST
THANK GOODNESS HE'S FINALLY BACK TO NORMAL
WHILE FIERCE, SUCH A BATTLE COULD HAVE BUT ONE OUTCOME-- HIS IMPURE HUMAN SPIRIT WAS NO MATCH FOR BELLDANDY... THE GODDESS FIRST CLASS (UNLIMITED).

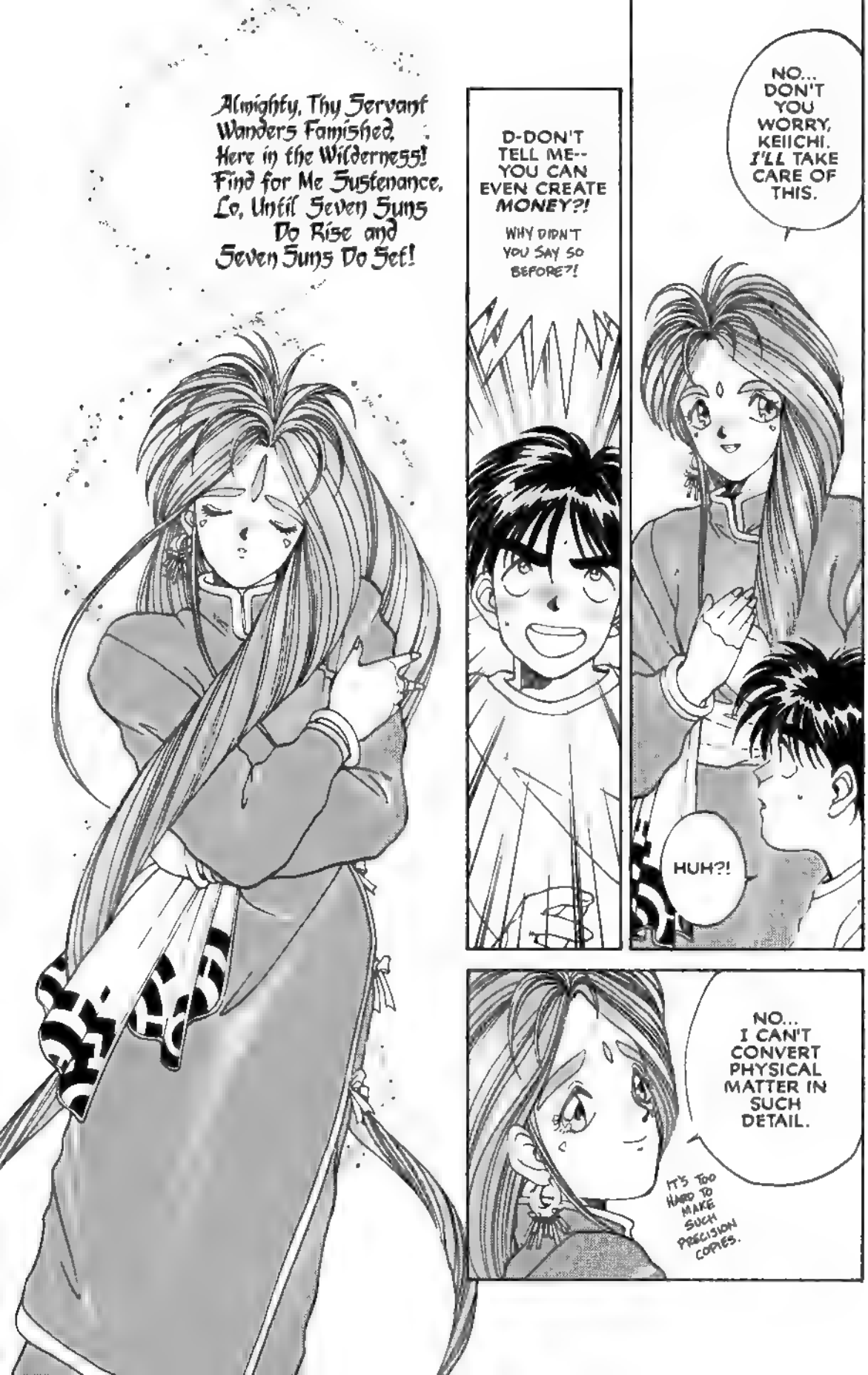

...
shhh
Good night, my Keiichi. ♡
LAST NIGHT... I FAILED!
BUT...
BUT TODAY, AT LEAST I'LL GET HER TO... KISS MY CHEEK!
...HE DIDN'T KNOW... SO IT DOESN'T COUNT.
AND SO HE DID IN FACT GET HIS WISH (SORT OF)...



CHAPTER 8

The Blossom in Bloom

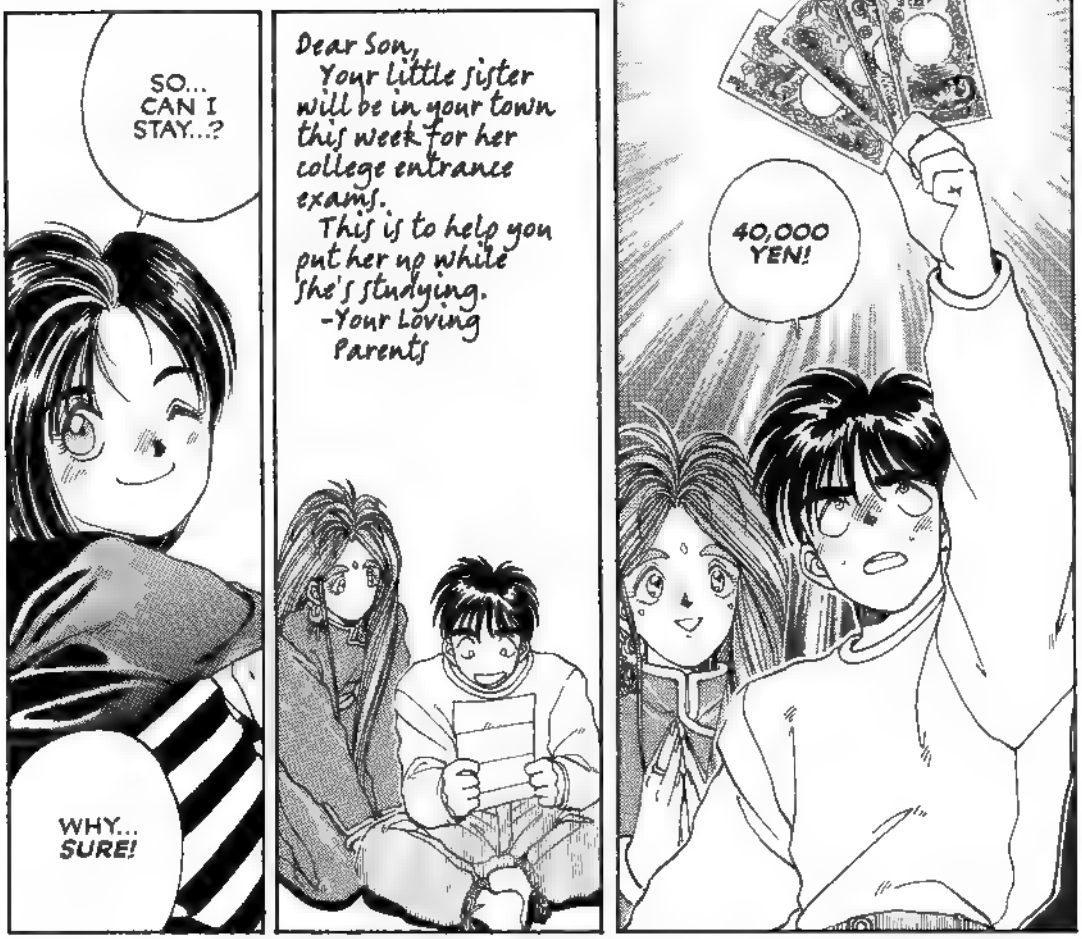
LOOK AT THIS MISERABLE BALANCE-- 520 YEN LEFT TO LAST US THE REST OF THE MONTH.
sigh
GEEZ.
HOW ABOUT THAT RAMEN ...?
NO... WE ATE IT ALL UP, DIDN'T WE ..?
WE'RE GONNA STARVE!
ONE MORE WEEK UNTIL MY FOLKS SEND ME MORE
NOTHING LEFT IN THE FRIDGE EXCEPT A TUBE OF WASABI AND A BOX OF BAKING SODA.
MAYBE I BETTER CUT CLASS... GET SOME PART-TIME WORK...
WE'VE TAKEN A LOT OF TRIPS.
WE WENT TO MY FRIEND'S WEDDING THIS MONTH...

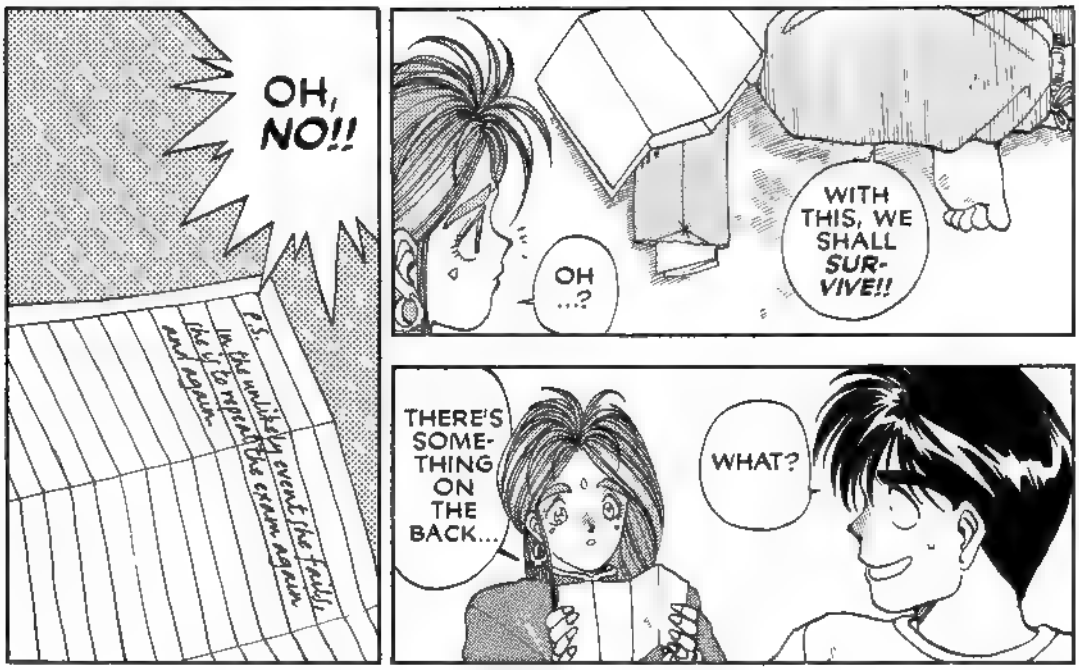

Almighty, Thy Servant Wanders Famished, Here in the Wilderness! Find for Me Sustenance, Lo, Until Seven Suns Do Rise and Seven Suns Do Set!
D-DON'T TELL ME-- YOU CAN EVEN CREATE MONEY?!
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO BEFORE?!
NO... DON'T YOU WORRY, KEIICHI. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.
HUH?!
NO... I CAN'T CONVERT PHYSICAL MATTER IN SUCH DETAIL.
IT'S TOO HARD TO MAKE SUCH PRECISION COPIES.

YO! ANYBODY HOME?
YES...?
!!
HEY!
M-MEGUMI ?!
GOODNESS, KEIICHI--YOU CERTAINLY SEEM TO HAVE A LOT OF FEMALE FRIENDS!
uh oh
lean

YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE I COME FROM, BELL!
OH, KEIICHI, NOW...I REALLY DON'T REALLY THINK YOU HAVE TO--
WOW! WHO WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IT? I MEAN, KEI-CHAN, LIVING WITH A BEAUTIFUL FORIEGNER! I MEAN, THAT'S JUST AMAZING!
Shouldn't you be in high school?
Shut it, brat
NO, HE DOESN'T I'M KEI-CHAN'S LITTLE SISTER... MEGUMI MORISATO. PLEASED T'MEETCHA!
THEY'RE GOING TO WANT TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE . HOW MUCH YOU MAKE A YEAR. !
RUMORS SPREAD LIKE THE FLU!
I KNOW THAT HAPPENS IN THE CITY, TOO - BUT TRUST ME ON THIS
THIS IS THE COUNTRY! THEY'LL TAKE THE TINIEST TIDBIT ABOUT A FELLER, AND BLOW IT UP INTO A TALL TALE!
THEY'LL HEAR, "OH YEAH THEY'VE GOT THREE KIDS!"
SHE'LL SAY, "OH YEAH THEY'RE LIVING TOGETH-ER.."
SHE'LL GO HOME AND START TALK-ING...

SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR DOCU-MENTARY, BUT. .
AH-- HELLO, HELLO?
A LETTER?
...I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.
WOW!
I HAD TO TRACK YOU DOWN TO HERE!
HEY! DON'T GIVE ME THAT! YOU NEVER TOLD US YOU GOT KICKED OUT OF YOUR DORM! THE LETTER CAME BACK HOME!
oh, yeah..
AND IT'S NOT NICE TO JUST SHOW UP WITHOUT ANY WARNING...
WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST MAIL IT...?

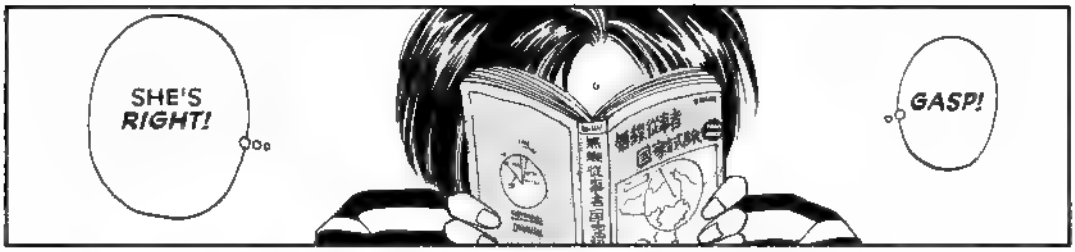

SO... CAN I STAY...?
WHY... SURE!
Dear Son,
Your little sister will be in your town this week for her college entrance exams.
This is to help you put her up while she's studying.
-Your Loving Parents
40,000 YEN!


OH, NO!!
P.S.
In the unlikely event that I fail, I'll be expecting you to help me study for the exam again and again.
OH ...?
WITH THIS, WE SHALL SURVIVE!!
THERE'S SOMETHING ON THE BACK...
WHAT?

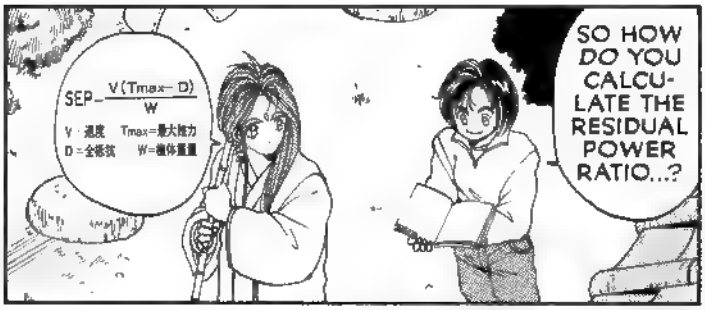
...AND SHE'S BOUND TO FIND OUT BELLDANDY'S A GODDESS!!
YES ...?
ER... BELL-DANDY ...?
AAGH! WE'RE DOOMED! WE CAN FOOL HER FOR A WEEK, MAYBE, BUT ANY LONGER THAN THAT...
YES!
HE CARES SO MUCH ABOUT HIS SISTER
WE GOTTA MAKE SURE MEGUMI PASSES HER EXAM!
NOK-NOK
COME IN!
I WILL BE ALONE WITH BELL AGAIN I WILL.

ACTUAL-LY... WAIT A SEC.
GIMME A BREAK, BRO. IF I DON'T KNOW THIS STUFF BY NOW, IT'S...
!!
ANY SUBJECTS WE CAN HELP YOU WITH...?
YO.
NO PROB.
YEAH. THIS.
MAY I SEE...?
HMM.
THIRTY MINUTES LATER

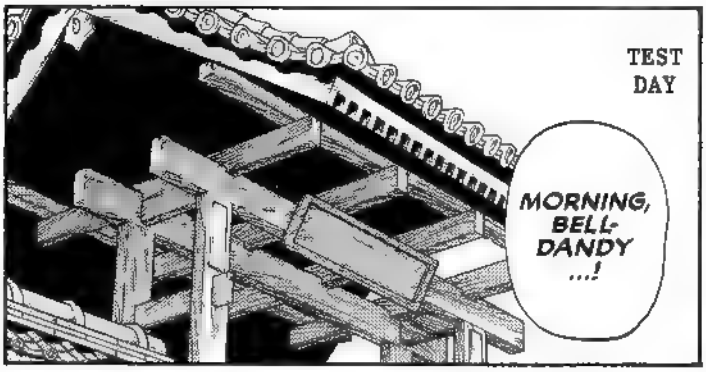
NO, NO...I THINK I'VE ALMOST GOT IT...
heh heh!
THAT'S FROM TOKYO UNIVERSITY'S ENTRANCE EXAM LAST YEAR. HAVE FUN.
TAKE YOUR TIME!
THINK YOU COULD SHOW ME HOW TO DO THIS?
mnphé OH... HEY.
slip
I'M NOT LIKE YOU, KEI-CHAN... SO YOU REALLY COULD RELAX.
HERE.
huh?
TEN SECONDS LATER

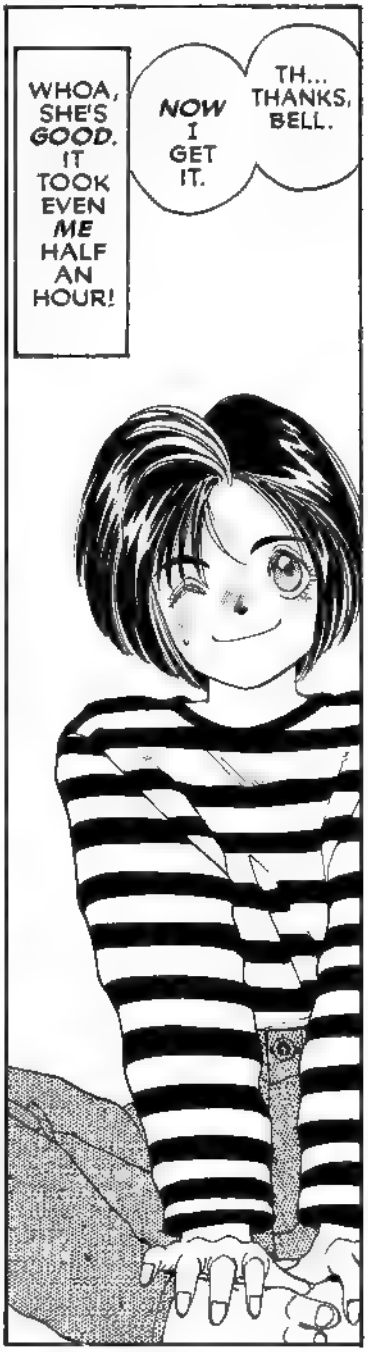

SHE'S RIGHT!
GASP!

LET ME SEE. OH, THAT MEANS...
OKAY... I'VE GOT TO TRANSLATE THIS INTO JAPANESE...
BUT I'LL STUMP YOU YET.


SEP=V(Tmax−D)/W
V：速度 Tmax=最大能力
D=全抵抗 W=機体重量
SO HOW DO YOU CALCULATE THE RESIDUAL POWER RATIO...?

ARRGH!
hmm
hmmm...


TEST DAY
MORNING, BELL-DANDY ...!


WHOA, SHE'S GOOD. IT TOOK EVEN ME HALF AN HOUR!
NOW I GET IT.
TH... THANKS, BELL.

I AM HERE ON THIS EARTH FOR KEIICHI ALONE
I WILL NEVER LEAVE HIS SIDE
WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS WITH MY BROTHER ?
TODAY IS THE BIG DAY ISN'T IT MEGUMI?
YEP! ER CAN YOU TELL ME ONE LAST THING?
OF COURSE!
DID SHE REALLY JUST SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I MEAN YOU THINK SHE'D BE A LITTLE EMBARRASSED

A WEEK LATER
I SOLVED IT!!
WELL... GUESS I BETTER GET MOVING...
AT THE EXAM SITE
UH, KEI-CHAN... IT'S WRONG.
MATH
PHYSICS
~ 12:20
14:00
OKAY, BEGIN!
I KNOW THIS STUFF, BUT...!
...I STILL GET FREAKED OUT.
BUT WHEN IT'S THE REAL EXAM...

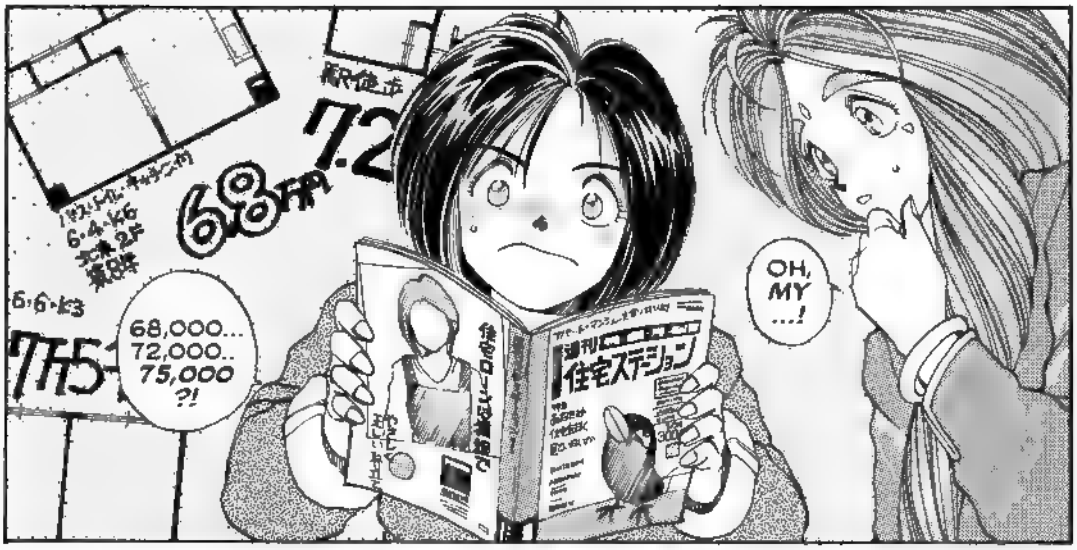
OH, COME ON, MEGUMI! THIS IS SILLY--JUST CALM DOWN, RELAX, AND GO FOR IT!
HEY!
poof
PANIC! I WON'T HAVE TIME! I CAN'T--
...huh?
IT'S WRONG! IT'S WRONG!
YES.... EXACTLY. JUST CALM DOWN..
B...B... BUT..YOU NEVER SAID YOU WERE APPLYING TO MY SCHOOL!
THAT'S RIGHT... I DIDN'T.
AND SO...
NEKOMI INSTITUTE ENTRANCE EXAM RESULT
52 3
58 4
70 7
71 8
72 9
73 10
74 11
76
THERE I AM!
YAHOO!
DANG.. SHE REAL SMART
HEY, I REMEMBER THIS! I DID ONE JUST LIKE IT WHEN I WAS TRYING TO STUMP BELLDANDY!

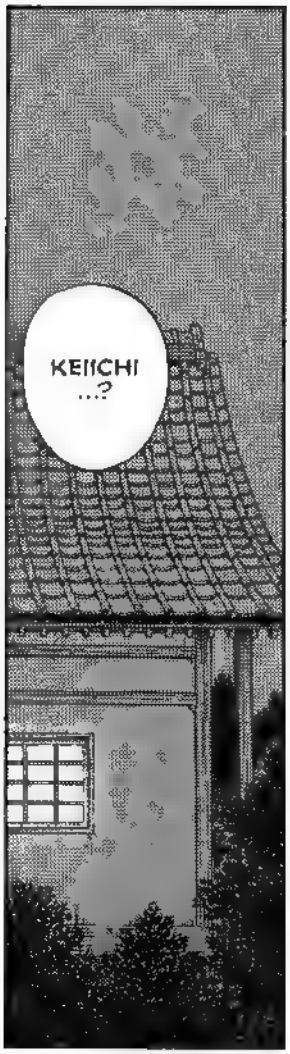
CHAPTER 9

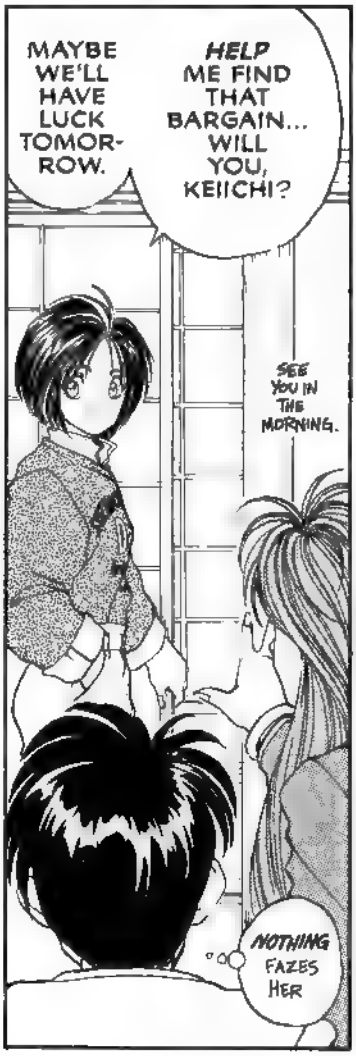
Apartment Hunting Blues

KEIICHI'S LITTLE SISTER MEGUMI HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AT NEKOMI TECH.
BUT WITH CLASSES JUST TWO WEEKS AWAY...
YOU *STILL* HAVEN'T FOUND A PLACE TO LIVE?
BUT I CAN STAY *HERE* UNTIL I FIND ONE... RIGHT?
I, er, KINDA JUST STARTED LOOKING *YESTER-DAY*.
R-I-I-I-I-G-H-T.
HEH, HEH-- CHECK THIS OUT! I WROTE UP A *FLYER!*
TO STICK ON TELEPHONE POLES AND STUFF
YOU THINK?
SHE'S SO ORGAN-IZED!
WHATCHA THINK?
LET'S SEE...
UM... LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT, SHALL WE?
SO, MEGUMI... WHAT KIND OF PLACE ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

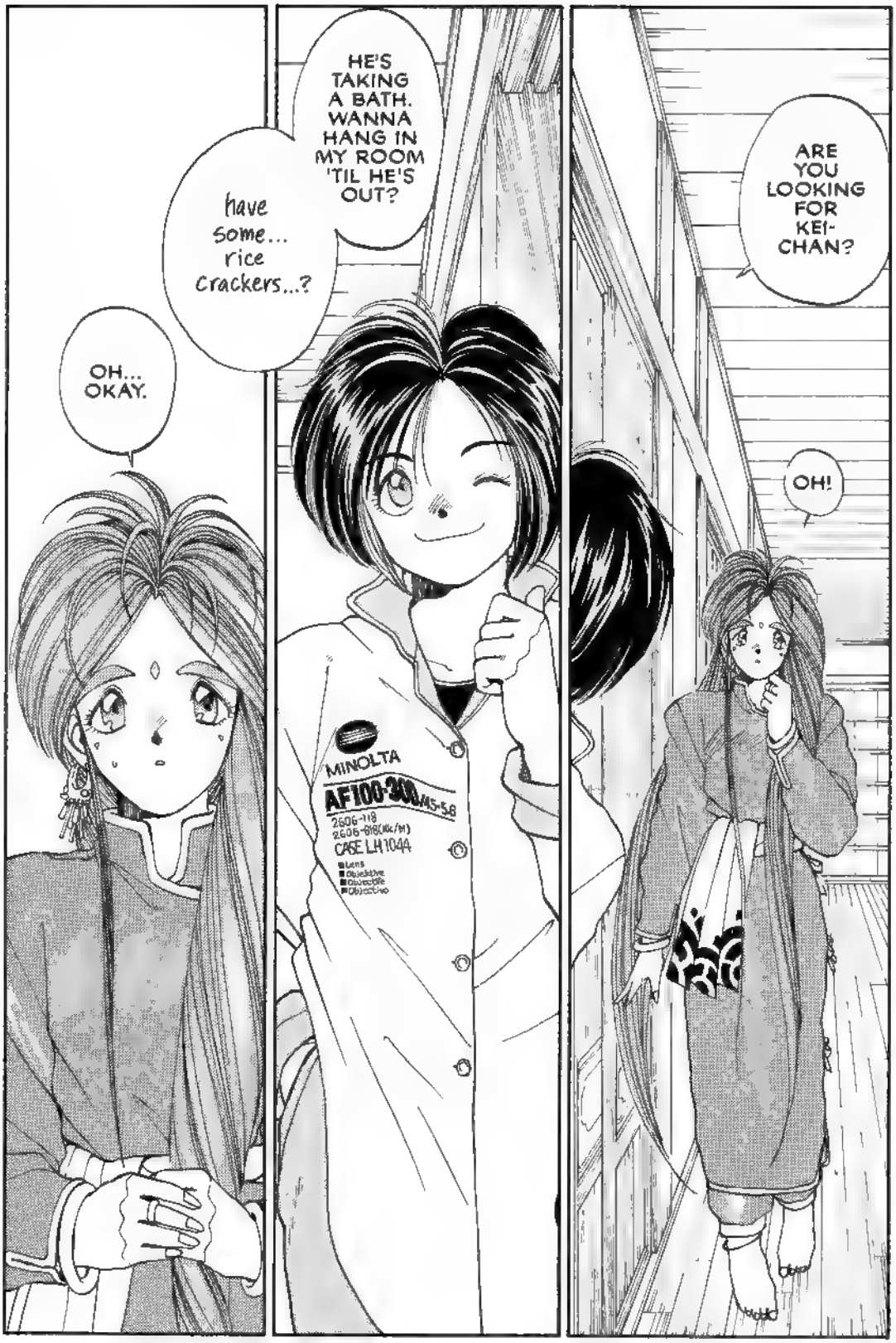
I DON'T KNOW.
Ho, Ho, Ho.
IS SOME-THING WRONG?
LET ME ACQUAINT YOU TWO LADIES WITH GRIM REALITY.
SOMEONE LEFT THIS ON THE BUS THE OTHER DAY--I MEANT TO GIVE IT TO YOU, MEGUMI.
THESE ARE CURRENT APARTMENT LISTINGS.
TWO SIX-MAT ROOMS WANTED W/BATH, W/TOILET, W/KITCHEN, LOCATED IN NEW APARTMENT UNIT.
(must not be more than five years old.)
MUST BE NO MORE THAN 10 MIN. WALK FROM CAMPUS. MUST HAVE SOUTHERN EXPOSURE.
(oh, excuse me-- southeastern exposure)
MAX RENT: 35,000 YEN.


68,000...
72,000..
75,000
?!
OH, MY ...!
週刊住宅ステーション


KEIICHI ...?


MAYBE WE'LL HAVE LUCK TOMOR-ROW.
HELP ME FIND THAT BARGAIN... WILL YOU, KEIICHI?
SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.
NOTHING FAZES HER

I KNOW WHAT THE PRICES ARE! I'M JUST HOPING TO FIND A BARGAIN!
I'M JUST KIDDING, OF COURSE.
DOT 3
Brake Fluid

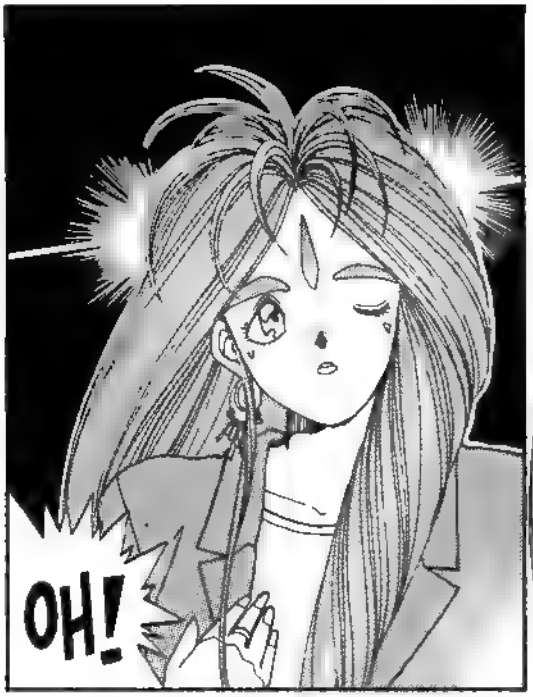

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR KEI-CHAN?
OH!
HE'S TAKING A BATH. WANNA HANG IN MY ROOM 'TIL HE'S OUT?
have some... rice crackers...?
OH... OKAY.
MINOLTA
AF100-300
CASE LH1044

I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO FIND... DIFFICULTY LOCATING THE KIND OF APARTMENT YOU WANT...
YES.
NOW... KNOWING YOU, I SORT OF FIGURE...
...YOU'RE GOING TO ASK KEIICHI TO LET ME LIVE HERE. RIGHT?
DON' WORRY ABOU' A 'FING...
OH, NEVER!
ANYWAY... DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OF WORRYING ABOUT THE WELL-BEING OF OTHER PEOPLE?
I LOOK. AND IF I DON'T FIND, WELL...I CHANGE THE PARA-METERS.

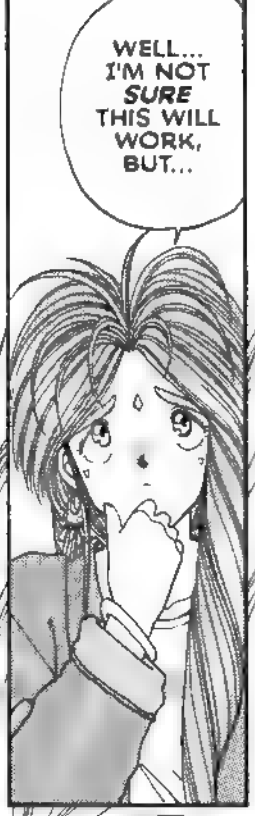
YOU SOUND LIKE THE GODDESS OF MERCY.
YOU BLOW ME AWAY, BELL. I MEAN, *LISTEN* TO YOU!
OH, NO. I'M THE GODDESS BELL--
OH! WOW! HA, *HA!* SO *THIS* IS WHERE YOU GOT TO!
?
...THERE'S *SOME-THING* ABOUT THAT GIRL...
LIKE, RIGHT *NOW!*
THAT WAS CLOSE THAT WAS VERY, VERY CLOSE
AH, HA, HA, HA, *HA!* I THOUGHT, *HEY*, I NEED TO TALK TOMORROW'S SCHEDULE OVER WITH *BELL-DANDY!*

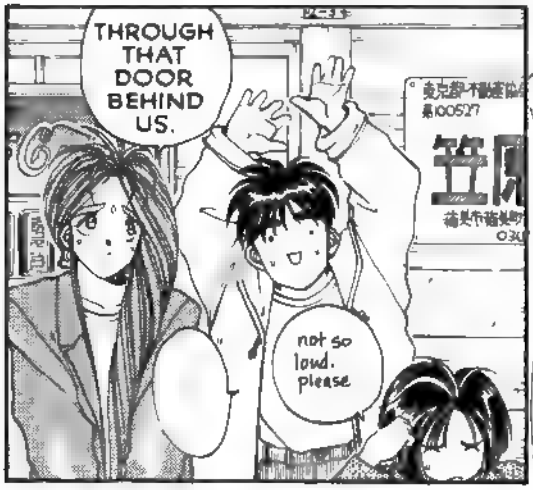
WELL, IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF A GOOD TIME...
LET'S START WITH THIS AGENCY
IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE WE'VE DONE ANYTHING TOGETHER, KEI-CHAN.
EXCUSE ME, SIR? I'M LOOKING FOR A PLACE LIKE THIS...
WHATTA YOU...KIDDIN' ME!? BEST LAUGH I GOT ALL DAY! 35 THOUSAND A MONTH-- GEDDOUDA-HEAH!

yeah, right-- start with the cheap places
NO THANKS.
WELL, IT'S NOT REALLY A TOILET... SORTA LIKE AN OUT-HOUSE...
HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT SHARIN' TOILETS?
NOT A CHANCE.
NO KID-DING.
I'M SO SORRY. ALL OUR LISTINGS ARE, er, SOMEWHAT MORE EXPENSIVE.
I HATE TO ASK, BELL, BUT... CAN'T YOU USE SOME KIND OF POWER?
DRANK IT TOO FAST...
OWWWWWWWW
I TRIED TO TELL HER...



Perfect Lodging
for which We Seek
Abandoned
in Solitude
Reveal to Me
Your Hiding Place
And Bring an End
to Your Loneliness!





YAHOO!
WE DID IT! WE FOUND A PLACE!
BUT.
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK.
...TO TAKE IT.
I WOULDN T ADVISE YOU .
FACING SOUTH-EAST... 20,000 YEN PER MONTH.
FOUR YEARS OLD... FULL BATH... BEDROOM, LIVING ROOM KITCHEN. TEN MINUTE WALK FROM CAMPUS...

OH?! THIS... THIS PLACE...
HUH? WHERE'D THE MYSTERIOUS OLD MAN GO?
WHO KNOWS.
WELL, OKAY-- I'LL TAKE IT!
...
I'M GONNA SCOPE OUT THE GARDEN. ❤
....

I KNOW THAT YOU ARE HERE! SHOW THYSELF!!
WHAT'S WRONG, BELL-DANDY?
YES, THIS ROOM FACES SOUTHEAST... AND TODAY IS A NICE, SUNNY DAY. YET...DON'T YOU FIND IT COLD?
YEAH... NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
WH-WHAT TH--?!
KWOOSHH

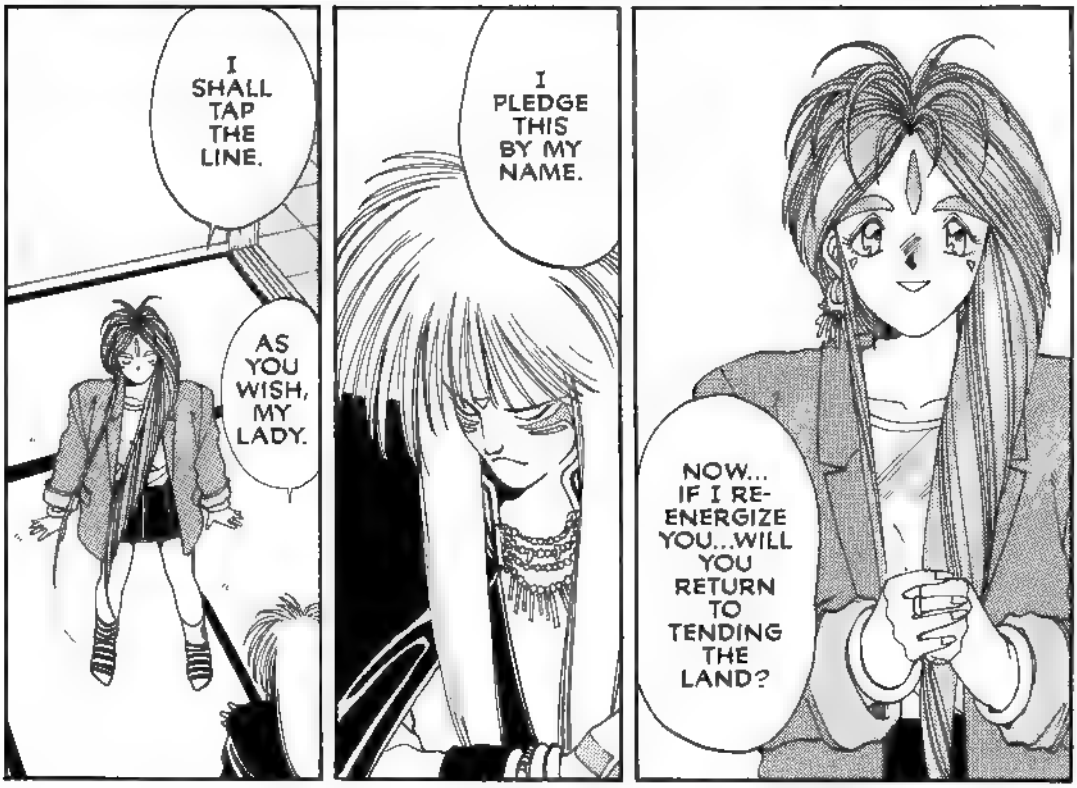
WHO ARE YOU, WOMAN?
SO IT WAS YOU. YOU TERRORIZED ALL THE PREVIOUS OCCUPANTS INTO MOVING OUT
AND YOU A MERE EARTH-SPIRIT, THIRD CLASS! I ASK YOU-- WHY?
HO! YOU KNOW ME FOR WHAT I AM, DO YOU?
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS ANYONE LIKE YOU IN THIS DIMENSION
HMM IT SEEMS YOU ARE WEAKENED BY BEING HERE
ENOUGH! I DON'T WANT A BATTLE RETURN TO THE EARTH WHERE YOU BELONG!

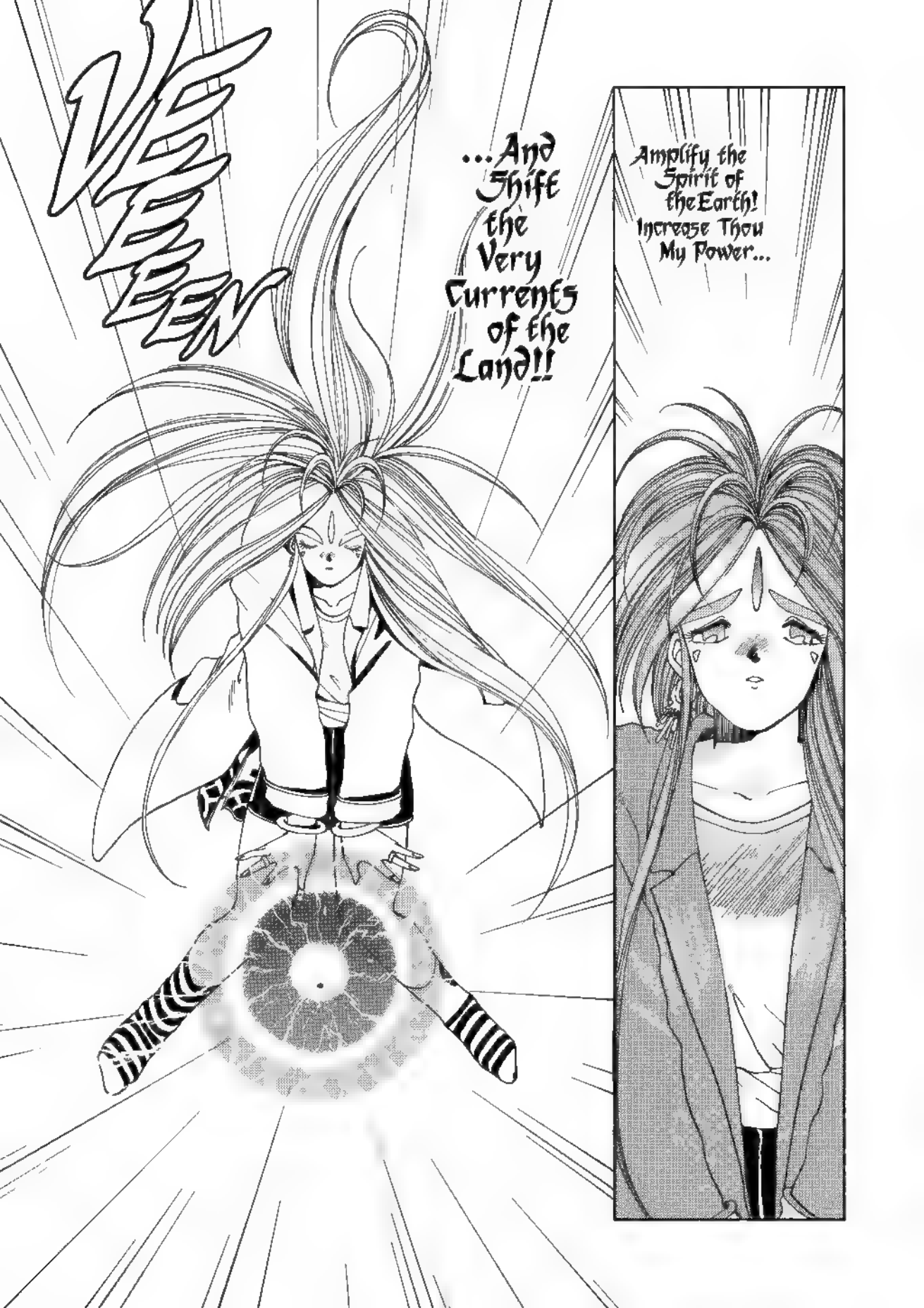
WHSSH
!!
THAT SHALL NOT BE.
fzk
NO! YOU'RE TRYING TO POSSESS HIM!
SHKK
THAT SHALL NOT BE!

FZZK
FZZAK
WHA--?! NO!!
YOU ARE...?!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, KEIICHI?
Y-YEAH... I JUST THINK... MY EYES ARE STILL STUCK ON "WIDE."
what was that?
....
RELEASE HIM IMMEDIATELY! THEN WE CAN DISCUSS THIS SITUATION!
I AM BELL-DANDY! GODDESS FIRST CLASS, TYPE TWO, UNLIMITED!

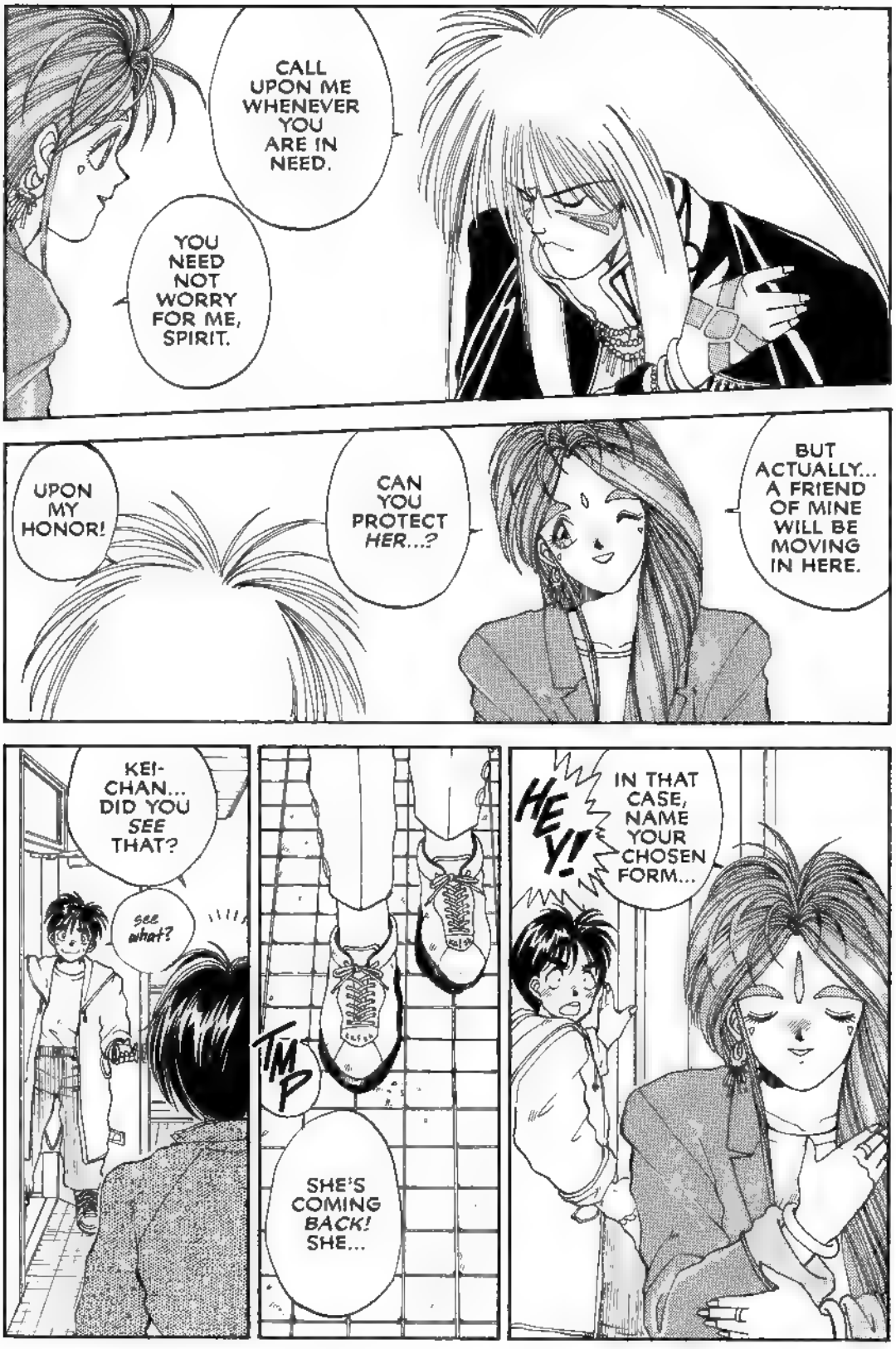
NOW... WHY WOULD A SPIRIT TASKED TO THE HEALTH OF THE EARTH AND SOIL...DO SUCH THINGS AS YOU HAVE DONE?
WELL, SEE, IT'S LIKE THIS...
WHOA! C'MON, BELL...
BODY. RIGHT.
IF HE'D POSSESSED YOU, IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN THREE WHOLE DAYS TO GET HIM OUT OF YOUR BODY!
THANK GOOD-NESS! ❤
WHEN THIS BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED, THE HUMANS DROVE A GROUNDING STAKE INTO THE MAIN CHANNEL OF MY LEY LINE.
I THOUGHT IF I COULD FRIGHTEN THE HUMANS AWAY, THEY MIGHT PULL OUT THE STAKE...AND LEAVE.
TRUE, IT WAS MY OWN CARE-LESSNESS THAT ALLOWED THIS TO OCCUR. YET, WITH THE STAKE IN PLACE, I AM BEREFT OF MOST OF MY POWERS.

WHEN A LINE IS BROKEN...
THEY'RE THE ROUTES THE EARTH SPIRITS TRAVEL. AND THE SOURCE OF ALL THEIR POWER.
"LEY LINE"...? WHAT'S THAT?
...THE LOCAL EARTH SPIRIT WITHERS, AND THE EARTH ITSELF IN THAT PLACE CAN DIE!


I SHALL TAP THE LINE.
AS YOU WISH, MY LADY.
I PLEDGE THIS BY MY NAME.
NOW... IF I RE-ENERGIZE YOU...WILL YOU RETURN TO TENDING THE LAND?


VEEEN
...And Shift the Very Currents of the Land!!
Amplify the Spirit of the Earth! Increase Thou My Power...

FLASH
MY LADY... I AM IN YOUR DEBT.
OW!


CALL UPON ME WHENEVER YOU ARE IN NEED.
YOU NEED NOT WORRY FOR ME, SPIRIT.
UPON MY HONOR!
CAN YOU PROTECT HER...?
BUT ACTUALLY... A FRIEND OF MINE WILL BE MOVING IN HERE.
KEI-CHAN... DID YOU SEE THAT?
see what?
TMP
SHE'S COMING BACK! SHE...
HEY!
IN THAT CASE, NAME YOUR CHOSEN FORM...

...HE'S ACTING REAL FUNNY.
YOU KNOW...
ER, WAIT! I CAN'T GO IN THERE RIGHT NOW!
HUH? WHY NOT?!
WELL, BECAU--
OH-- HELLO, MEGUMI!
DO YOU SEE THIS RAT?
HE'S GOING TO LOOK AFTER YOU.
SHRIEK!
AND HE'S STILL THERE TODAY

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English-language version
produced by Dark Horse Comics

OH MY GODDESS! Vol. 1
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Published by Dark Horse Manga
A division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10956 SE Main Street
Milwaukie, OR 97222
www.darkhorse.com

To find a comics shop in your area,
call the Comic Shop Locator Service
toll-free at 1-888-266-4226

First edition: October 2005
ISBN 978-1-59307-387-9

3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4

Printed at Lake Book Manufacturing, Inc.,
Melrose Park, IL, USA

letters to the ENCHANTRESS

10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222
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First of all, thanks to all the readers for the positive reception of *Oh My Goddess!* Vol. 21 (see below). We received a number of responses to it, which will be printed in the "Letters to the Enchantress" section of Vol. 22. If you're starting the *OMG!* story right here with Vol. 1, though, we'd like *your* letters and fan art to print in Vol. 2! Read on . . .

Welcome to Vol. 1 of the new edition of *Oh My Goddess!* In July, Dark Horse released the first volume of *OMG!* in this new edition . . . which was actually Vol. 21. If you're brand new to this manga series, that last statement doesn't seem to make much sense, but please don't go ^_^ Simply put, Dark Horse has already been releasing *Oh My Goddess!* in English for eleven years, but always in the "flopped," left-to-right reading (i.e., normal English direction) format, which was in fact the industry standard until just a few years ago.

After getting all the way up to Vol. 20 in left-to-right (and these volumes, by the way, are still available), Dark Horse decided to switch to right-to-left, the new industry standard. This switch means not only that all new volumes in the story are being re-released right-to-left (hence, Vol. 21 in July), but Dark Horse is also going back and re-releasing all the *old* volumes, Vols. 1–20, in right-to-left format (hence, the book you're reading right now).

The idea is to serve both the fans who were already reading *Oh My Goddess!* in its old format, and the new fans we hope will discover this charming, and, shall we say, highly influential series. From now on, every two months, Dark Horse will switch off between "new" and "old" volumes. So, in January 2006 will come *OMG!* Vol. 22; in April 2006, *OMG!* Vol. 2; in June, *OMG!* Vol. 23, and so forth.

Oh My Goddess! is not only the second-longest continuously published manga series in the United States, it's been one of the more enduring manga series in Japan, too. The stories in this first volume ran originally in *OMG!*'s home magazine, the monthly *Afternoon* (also home of Dark Horse titles such as *Seraphic Feather, Blade of the Immortal, Gunsmith Cats,* and *Cannon God Exaxxion*), between November of 1988 and May of 1989. *Afternoon* magazine's very first issue had come out just the year before *Oh My Goddess!* started, so this manga has been very much a part of its history, and as of the October 2005 issue of *Afternoon,* the story is now up to Chapter 204.

It's a little startling to realize when *OMG!* began, Ronald Reagan was still president, and Osamu Tezuka was still alive. It was an interesting time both for Japan, and for manga. In 1988 Japan was known mainly to

the West as a challenger for geopolitical prominence—the same way people talk about China today, but more so. The '80s had that very cyberpunk, *Blade Runner*-type vision of a future that would belong no longer to American, but to Japanese corporate imperialism. That didn't seem like such a bad thing to me when I was eighteen, if simply because Japanese corporate imperial products were much cooler.

Like Keiichi, I was a sophomore in college in the fall of 1988, and writing term papers about future economic conflict with Japan—or even future war. Never about anime or manga, though. Oddly enough, what was missing back then was mainstream American interest in Japanese *pop culture*. The big Japan-related stories that year were about the trade deficit, or how Japanese companies were buying American corporations and famous buildings, or whether American companies should use Japanese methods of organization—in other words, business and political issues. But anime and manga, as such, still barely existed on the radar of the American mass media, or indeed, in academia—these days it seems *most* of the university writing about Japan is about anime and manga.

Of course, there were otaku back then, too—I was already one—but you would sometimes get this weird vibe of a type you wouldn't really get today, where people would ask, shouldn't you be studying *serious* Japanese stuff so you can learn how to help America compete with Mitsubishi? As for professors hanging out at anime shows on campus, forget it, they wanted you to get a grounding in Japanese history and literature. I don't think that's such a bad idea for an anime fan either, as anime, like everything else, emerges out of a historical reality (although many have loved anime without knowing anything about Japan, or indeed, without even knowing it was Japanese).

It occurs to me now in writing this, that it's probably a good thing for Japanese studies departments that Americans are now so into anime and manga—because it eventually picked up the interest in Japan that had dipped after the Japanese economic bubble burst in the early '90s. You never know how these things are going to turn out; a friend of mine from high school completed his degree in Soviet Studies in 1991, the year the Soviet Union collapsed To date there has been no compensating boom in Russian animation and comics

---

EDITOR'S COMMENTARY ON VOL. 1:

3.6: The little dab of watercolor that goes over the top panel border between the word balloons was in the original. We are now so authentic it *hurts*.

7.2: The drawing tacked to the wall to the upper right of Bell-chan's head reads *shochuu*, meaning the middle of summer. Who drew it? A younger relative of one of the guys in the dorm?

14.1 The little octopus seen below Keiichi's left hand is a reference to *Kure Kure Takora* ("Gimme Gimme Octopus"), a wild Japanese live-action kid's show from 1973 about a greedy young, well, octopus, whose catchphrase is "Gimme! Gimme!" and whose eight arms come in handy for the task. Takora is said to also make a cameo near the beginning of the famous "Mr. Sparkle" ad in *The Simpsons*. Two Japanese sites about the show can be found at: http.//www.kagurazaka.co.jp/kachimo/takora/takora.html (this one will play the theme song for you) and http://www001.upp.so-net.ne.jp/kindan-hm/takora.html (more images up front).

19.2: Belldandy's parable of the TV antenna already seems a bit dated, as most Americans today get their TV through cable or digital satellite. However, Japan, which usually has a well-deserved reputation for being ahead of America on technical developments, didn't really start to introduce cable television until well into the 1980s.

27.1: When this story was first published in English in 2000, and later when it was collected in *OMG!* Vol 1, it was called "Into The Lair of the Anime Otaku." Sada *is* recognizable as a stereotypical otaku (he even bears some physical resemblance to Tanaka, the "Otaking" of Gainax's must-see 1991 *Otaku no Video*, available in the U.S. through animeigo.com—also home to the original *Oh My Goddess!* anime series). But in fact the word "otaku" never appears in the original Japanese story; instead, the chapter title (and Keiichi) refer to Sada not as an "anime otaku," but as an "anime mania"—literally, using the English word "mania," which in Japanese becomes pronounced as "mah-nee-ah" instead of "may-nee-ah."

This is no more than speculation, but it is also possible that Fujishima *did* use "otaku" when this story first appeared in the December 1988 issue of *Afternoon*, but that it was changed for the graphic novel. The first printing of *Oh My Goddess!* Vol. 1 in Japan is dated August 23, 1989, exactly one month after the arrest of Tsutomu Miyazaki. An otaku who committed depraved serial killings, Miyazaki made the term notorious for a period of several years in the Japanese media (today it has been somewhat co-opted, if not always respected, as a marketable subculture, like gangster rap). In such an atmosphere of hysteria, it might have been deemed imprudent to refer to Sada as an otaku, even if he clearly is one—hence a change to the term "mania."

Again, however, that is no more than speculation, and the loan-word "mania"—the Japanese use "mania" where we would say "maniac"—to describe an obsessed fan is older in Japan than this meaning for "otaku," which didn't acquire that association until the early 1980s ("otaku" is just a form of the pronoun "you"—Jack Seward's 1969 book *Japanese in Action* recommended "otaku" as more masculine than the polite *anata* ordinarily taught in class!). But I found its use here intriguing, and it brought to mind a recollection that in the mid-'90s, scholar Kenji Sato (whose controversial essay on anime, "More Animated Than Life" was quoted in Donald Richie's 2002 book *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*) was then trying to promote the term "mania" as a more positive substitute for "otaku"—an interesting reversal.

In any event, I don't believe Fujishima meant any special disrespect in his timeless portrayal of Sada; *Oh My Goddess!* found early affection among otaku audiences (it has been observed that the many imitations of *OMG!* over the years have progressively exploited its "harem" premise with overkill on fan service, without achieving Fujishima's sensitivity and elegance). Kosuke Fujishima himself trained as an assistant under the genuinely maniacal Tatsuya Egawa (best known in America for the anime based on his manga *Golden Boy*), who was even then a friend of Gainax's Hideaki Anno, and in fact used to draw covers for Gainax's *doujinshi*. It's fair to guess that Fujishima knew his way around otaku long before the general public had even heard the word.

It isn't the intention, by the way, of the new edition of *Oh My Goddess!* to make changes to the original English version merely for the sake of having it be "closer to the Japanese," if the so-called "closer" version actually makes things less clear. Changing "otaku" to "mania," as this edition

does, in fact risks just that. But I thought the background behind the word was of sufficient interest to make the change; fortunately "anime mania" is readily understandable in English as an anime obsession, even if the reader doesn't realize at first that "mania" is being used here not to refer to the obsession, but to the obsessed person.

28.4: In this era, I'm surprised passersby didn't mistake her for Axl Rose.

32.6: Note Bell-chan clutching one of her shoes; Keiichi didn't even give her time to put them both back on (after taking them off to enter a Japanese house).

34.6: Probably a play on *Magical Emi* (1985) and/or *Creamy Mami* (1983), two "magical girl" shows that were early projects of industry titan Studio Pierrot, who more recently made the anime versions of *Great Teacher Onizuka, Naruto,* and *Bleach.*

37.4: Belldandy is holding a laserdisc. Before the Great Fire War destroyed human civilization, the Ancient Ones inscribed wondrous sounds and pictures on these shining plates, which resembled a DVD—yet so large that a warrior's hand's-breadth would not span its surface! Or so the elders of the tribe tell us.

37.5: To be a bit more specific, the 12-inch laserdisc, or LD, format, came onto the market in the late 1970s and, until the DVD supplanted it in the late 1990s, was basically the high-end alternative to watching movies on videotape. The LD format had a few advantages compared to DVD; you never had to worry about "artifacting" as you sometimes do with DVDs, as the visuals on an LD were stored in an uncompressed analog format. From a collector's standpoint, many movies (like the original cuts of the *Star Wars* films) had versions on LD different on their VHS or DVD releases, also, the large size of the LD envelope allowed the potential for beautiful layout and extras such as posters. Big disadvantages were the fact that, unlike DVDs, LDs weren't available as blank media, and could only store one hour of a movie (or half an hour, in the higher-quality "CAV" format—but never mind) before you had to flip them over and play the other side.

LDs were always bigger in Japan than in America, where they were generally confined to cinephiles and the tech-oriented; and of course, among those categories, quite a few otaku. Pioneer LDCA (now known as Geneon) was well-regarded for the high quality of their anime LDs in the mid-'90s; as well they might be, as Pioneer was the world's leading manufacturer of laserdiscs. Superelite status, however, was exuded by fans such as the editor, who bought import Japanese LDs (laserdiscs also had none of that DVD nonsense about region encoding) *despite having no LD player.* They sat on the shelf in their wrapper and were merely contemplated. It was a higher, spiritual way of enjoying the show.

38.2: Look at the little flying creature at top right; this is a close-up of the upper left corner of page 38, and probably takes the prize for the most obscure in-joke in Vol. 1 of *OMG!*—for the only way you would ever know it existed is if you had access to images of Mr. Fujishima's original manga art before it's laid out for printing. You can't actually *see* it on the page in either the Dark Horse or the original Japanese edition, because the doodle is above the top "bleed" line for page 38—a bleed is where an artist draws a panel deliberately so that the art will go off the edge of the page, as opposed to art drawn inside panel borders.

The doodle is apparently of "Noripii-Man," a character associated with Noriko Sakai, an idol singer and actress (official site http://www.sunmusic.org/noriko/index.html). Seventeen years old in December of 1988 when this story first appeared in *Afternoon*, she had just released her fourth album, *Lovely Times*. The same year, Noriko Sakai sang "Active Heart," the theme to Gainax's original *Gunbuster* anime series. "Noripii" (sometimes spelled "Nori-P") is her nickname, formed by shortening "Noriko" and adding the cute-sounding suffix "pii." Michael Gombos points out this usage is common among ko-gals; Ropponmatsu II also uses it in *Excel Saga*.

39.4: We honestly don't know what the tiny notes below the bottom panel border, "Garikin," and "Puupii," mean. They seem to be pointing to the spirits Belldandy senses to either side, they also sound a bit like manga sound FX. But as Morrissey said—although this isn't really his kind of manga—"there's always someone somewhere with a big nose who knows," so if you are that someone, please feel free to write in and inform *Letters to the Enchantress*. Big nose or not.

41.2: In the original Japanese, Sada said literally, "My world exists inside this 26-inch square," which is not only a good line, but a surprising indication of TVs in Japan being marketed in inches—under most circumstances, of course, Japan is metric (see note for 166.3-4 below).

45.1: Satoshi Iwataki and Satoru Nakamura are the names of real people in the anime industry (for example, Satoshi Iwataki was a key animator on the recent *Tide-Line Blue* and Satoru Nakamura was an animation director on *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*). We're not absolutely sure if Fujishima-san was doing a shout-out to these same people, although it is certainly possible, as he knows a number of people in the anime industry (this will come up later) and Nakamura, at least, was working on the notorious *Angel Cop* at the time this story was first published (December of 1988). "Nozomi Omori" was a tribute to the Studio Proteus agent in Japan (Omori is also a SF critic and translator, having adapted Japanese versions of Rudy Rucker's *Freeware* and Joe Haldeman's *The Hemingway Hoax*). The original version didn't give the music composer's full name.

50.2: The video Sada gives Belldandy is called *Magical Masseuse Fashion Lele*. Did she ever watch it? By the way, it is in a so-called "clamshell" case, of the kind a video rental store would give you to take away the tape in (as opposed to the simple printed cardboard sleeve). In the late 1980s and early '90s, some American anime companies, most notably Pioneer, AnimEigo, and U.S. Renditions, sold tapes in a "clamshell" as a mark of prestige. I can't help but remember an incident at an

anime convention—I think it was in 1999—where I was on a panel giving out free *Ranma 1/2* videos as prizes ... and the look on the audience's faces when they realized they were in VHS indicated that for otaku, at least, the DVD era was now firmly in place.

71.4: The monk seems to regard Belldandy's goddess mark as a *byakugo*, the third, "all-seeing" eye traditionally associated with portrayals of a *nyorai*, one who has achieved enlightenment in the Buddhist tradition (a category that includes the historical Buddha himself as well as those who achieved enlightenment after him)

73.1-2: In Zen Buddhism, *zazen* is the well-known sitting form of meditation. The relentless whacking of Keiichi with a bamboo stave is designed to help his concentration; an exaggeration of an actual Zen practice, but also an indication that many Japanese don't take religion perfectly seriously (for more on the Japanese relation to historical Buddhism, please see the notes in the back of the Dark Horse release *Katsuya Terada's The Monkey King*).

75.1: It's interesting that when Belldandy used her power to place shoes upon her bare goddess feet, she made them into New Balance, the same label as the editor's sneaks. Or "trainers," for our U.K. readership.

77.3: In the mid-'80s, Toyota was notably involved in research towards making auto engines out of advanced ceramics instead of metal. The theoretical advantages are great: not only would ceramic engines weigh less, increasing efficiency for the overall car (after all, the engine has to move its own weight as well as that of the car and its passengers), but ceramic engines can burn fuel at temperatures where a normal engine would overheat (not to mention melt into slag) which itself makes fuel use more efficient. However, while ceramic engines have been demonstrated in the lab, the industrial processes to mass-produce them safely (meaning, without cracks, because of the danger from their superheated fuel) has never been perfected. Some have voiced suspicion that ceramic engines are being kept off the market by conspiracy, but the Japanese have been the world leaders at marketing fuel-efficient technologies, so I am inclined to accept the simple engineering explanation.

84.5: Boy-oh-boy Forget the LD, look at them 5 1/4" disc drives in the computer. They were just a little larger than a CD, except they were square, black, and had approximately 1/583 the storage capacity, limiting you to no more than a few "H".gifs at a time.

110.5: Otaki and Tamiya are probably named after the eponymous Japanese plastic model companies, but note that *otakki* is a variant on "otaku" sometimes used among otaku themselves. It's employed as both a noun and adjective—a slang use of a slang use, as if "otaku" were a Japanese adverb (which, of course, it isn't; see note for 27.1) ending in "ku" like *hayaku* ("quickly") that becomes an adjective when spelled with an "i" (so *hayai* means "fast").

It is sometimes reported that "otakki" was coined after the Tsutomu Miyazaki murders to distance the scene from the word otaku, but in fact the word is documented at least four years earlier than that, in Vol. 04, No. 014 of *Manga Puppeteer Tsushin* ("Manga Puppeteer Dispatch," a quarterly manga magazine published by General Products, the company called "Grand Prix" in *Otaku no Video*—see note for 27.1). Although no larger than an American comic book (ahem) at a stapled

38 pages, it featured short manga pieces by Hideaki Anno, *Cannon God Exaxxion's* Kenichi Sonoda, and, as aforementioned, covers by Kosuke Fujishima's mentor, Tatsuya Egawa.

The word appears on page 7 of this issue, within an astonishingly angry open letter to a "Mr. Komak"—who appears to be a magazine editor—written in equally astonishing English, verbatim: "You are the XXXX of mother XXXXing son of a Rich bich. Put your XXXX into your XXXXing XXX hole. You are just like a fore father of OTACKY people arnt you dummy?" The words represented here by Xs are considered unsuitable for a kind-hearted title like *Oh My Goddess!*.

The letter, incidentally is signed by a "Sakura Dai," (a.k.a. "Day Sakura,") whom, I believe, is the person listed in the credits of *Pop Chaser* as its director, and hence, would therefore be a pseudonym for Hiroyuki Kitakubo, later the internationally acclaimed director of *Blood the Last Vampire*, of which Andy Wachowski said, "it was as if the art of Francis Bacon had come to life."

Documentary evidence; from the embers of a flame war long-forgotten. It is good to be able to share this with you; this terrible burden of knowledge that an otacky carries inside.

111.3: The sign on the door above Kakuta Labs reads *Fu-Rin-Ka-Zan*, a maxim said to be from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, meaning "wind-forest-fire-mountain." In Japan it was made most famous as the banner of Takeda Shingen, one of the great lords of Japan's 16th century era of civil war. The idea behind the slogan is that a military strategy should incorporate the qualities of these natural features.

The kind of redwood burly-looking thing hanging to the left side of the door reads *Kakuta-heya*, "(The) Kakuta Room" The sign tacked to the board on the right-hand side of the hall thanks "helpers Yoshihiko Asano, Namie Iwao, and Ozuka Kunio." Mr. Fujishima's assistants?

112.4: Belldandy appears to be expressing her spell here in the Thai alphabet, although the characters seem to be chosen at random

113.4: The various graffiti written on the outside of the darkroom read, "Shut the lights when you leave!" "Stinks (in here)" "Please don't put anything on top," and more stridently, "Don't put anything up here!" (the request has been ignored, of course). Hanging down from the upper right corner of the darkroom curtain is an "Open for Business" sign that looks suspiciously swiped from some off-campus establishment.

113.6: Besides the bird and the Sumo wrestler, other objects on Otaki's mind are Almond Glico caramels, and a pack of Noritama-brand egg-flavored *furitake*, a flaky condiment that livens up any bowl of rice.

123.3: Otaki is wearing a Takora outfit, minus the head (see note for 14.1).

136.4: In Keiichi's frantic scattering of his chattels, we see he's got Yu's magic wand from *Creamy Mami* (see note for 34.6)—not to mention a Barbie doll, still in its collector's packaging It kind of makes you wonder if his height isn't the only reason he's had poor luck with women.

138.1: Hiroko Kasahara is, as you might expect, a J-pop singer; she was nineteen years old when this story was first published in Japan, prompting the original Dark Horse English version to change her to "Tiffany," which by now would itself

require its own lengthy note of explanation. Kasahara might be better-known today to most U.S. fans as an anime *seiyuu* (voice actor); she played Fuu in *Magic Knights Rayearth* and Misuki's mother, Hazuki, in *Full Moon wo Sagashite.*

"Sudara-bushi" is a famous, funny Japanese song from the early 1960s about various stupid things one is unable to stop doing, no matter how many times they go wrong. It was written by Tessho Hagiwara and first made famous by singer Hitoshi Ueki. In the original Dark Horse English version, "Weird Al" Yankovic was considered to be an equivalent

Q-Taro the Ghost was a 1965 anime TV series, remade in 1971 and again in 1985, based on a manga by Fujiko Fujio, Hiroshi Fujimoto, and Motoo Abiko, the creators of *Doraemon.* It's also the subject of an extended joke in "Understanding *Oh My Goddess!* ... In Eight Pages Or Less!" the fan manga by Yoshitoh Asari which opens Dark Horse's forthcoming book *Oh My Goddess! Colors.*

138.4: The original English version of Vol. 1 had Keiichi plotting to play Barry White, but interestingly, his own taste in romantic music runs to George Winston, a pianist who made the Windham Hill label famous for their "New Age" music with his 1982 album *December.*

149.5: The mental image Keiichi projects of the way people supposedly dress in his hometown would be like claiming American farmers today still look like the couple in Grant Wood's painting *American Gothic,* which you should really take the train to go see the next time you're attending Anime Central.

151.1: The guy on those four ¥10,000 notes is Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901) both one of the last generation of samurai, and a founder of modern Japan. Fukuzawa played—as an educator, newspaper publisher, and advocate of self-reliance—roles comparable to those of Benjamin Franklin in the founding of America. In his own *Autobiography,* Fukuzawa talks about what it was like to try and study modern science in the twilight of the samurai era, when a single imported textbook (the only kind available) on electrical theory cost today's equivalent of US$20,000 in gold Strangely, his own college days as he describes them—full of chemical experiments gone horribly wrong—sound not unlike a tale from Nekomi Tech, as do headings from that time in his *Autobiography* like, "We were capable of petty stealing," "Street fights for laughs," "Nudeness brings many adventures," and "Sanitation is all but disregarded."

Like Ben Franklin on the US $100 bill, today Yukichi is on Japan's 10,000-yen note, the highest-valued bill in circulation. And just as in America, where it's all about the Benjamins, in Japan, it's all about the Yukichis. Michael Gombos, Dark Horse's Japanese Licensing Manager, points out Rina Ayukawa ("A-Ayukawa!"), a Kobe girl on the recent TV Asahi show *London Hearts* (a comedy show produced by "London Boots," the troupe name of Atsushi and Ryo Tamura—official site, http://www.lonboo.com/, an English-language review at http://www.insitetokyo.com/column/hilo/index9 html) popularized the saying about men and their money or unfortunate lack thereof, *otoko wa yappari Yukichi da ne* (which means basically, "as far as guys go, you know it all comes down to the Yukichis"). It should be noted that Risa herself became known by the title *Shijo Saiaku Mashou Onna,* "The Most Witchiest Girl In History," which, appropriately enough, also sounds very much like an *Oh My Goddess!* story.

154.2: Tokyo University is, together with Keio University (which Yukichi Fukuzawa founded) often considered to be the top school in Japan. But, hell, you've read *Love Hina;* you know that.

155.4: Velocity times the product of maximum thrust force minus total resistance, the sum then divided by the weight of the fuselage. I think. At Pomona, I majored in history. N.I.T. was Harvey Mudd.

166.3-4: About the rentals listings that are up on the wall: the top line of each listing indicates how many minutes away the apartment is from Nekomi Tech, suggesting, of course, this place rents to a lot of students. The big number(s) in the center give the size of the apartment as measured in *jo,* which is the theoretical size of a Japanese tatami mat. I say *theoretical,* as exactly how big a "jo" is can vary by region in Japan, and also on the age of the building (it is said that a jo doesn't go as far as it used to), and whe-ther one is talking about an apartment, a condominium, or a house. This is one case where even the U.S.'s old-fashioned use of feet and inches is more specific. Having said that, a "typical" jo for an apartment is roughly 16 1/2 square feet.

Returning to the way these listings are written, a single big number (like the "6") means a one-room studio apartment; the "K" next to it confirms a kitchen. Two numbers (like the "6.3") mean a two-room apartment; here the "D" means a dining room. Three numbers (like the "6.6.45") means three rooms. The numbers themselves measure how many jo each room is; traditionally, you'll notice, in multiples of 1.5 (the "45" signifies 4.5). So a 3-jo room is about 49 1/2 sq. feet, a 4.5-jo room is about 74 sq. feet, and a 6-jo room is about 99 sq. feet. This is what happens, of course, when you have 127 million people living in a country the size of California.

The line below the big number(s) confirms the number of rooms. We know what you're getting for your money, but for how much money? The lower right numbers indicate the monthly rent for each unit; the first number shows how many tens of thousands, then how many thousands. So the "6" studio apartment (where you might have to share bathrooms, like in a dorm) costs 32,000 yen a month, whereas the "6.6.45" goes for a whopping 103,000. This particular chapter of *Oh My Goddess!* appeared in May of 1989; however, these rents are the same kind you might still find today around many universities—although in Tokyo you would probably pay at least a third more.

Finally, in the lower left corner of each listing are two numbers. The first is the number of months' rent that must be paid as *shikikin,* a security deposit refundable upon moving out. All of these units demand two months' rent for shikikin, but that's fair enough, like the standard American "first and last month's rent." But the second number is the disgusting practice of *reikin,* the so-called "remuneration" which is basically a bribe—or obligatory gift if you like—given to your landlord for the privilege of being allowed to pay rent to live there! As you can see, all these units also ask two months' rent for that, too—and needless to say, you don't get it back.

Nor is there any guarantee your landlord will look like Kyoko Otonashi. Sorry, but this volume *is* on the eighties tip.

—CGH

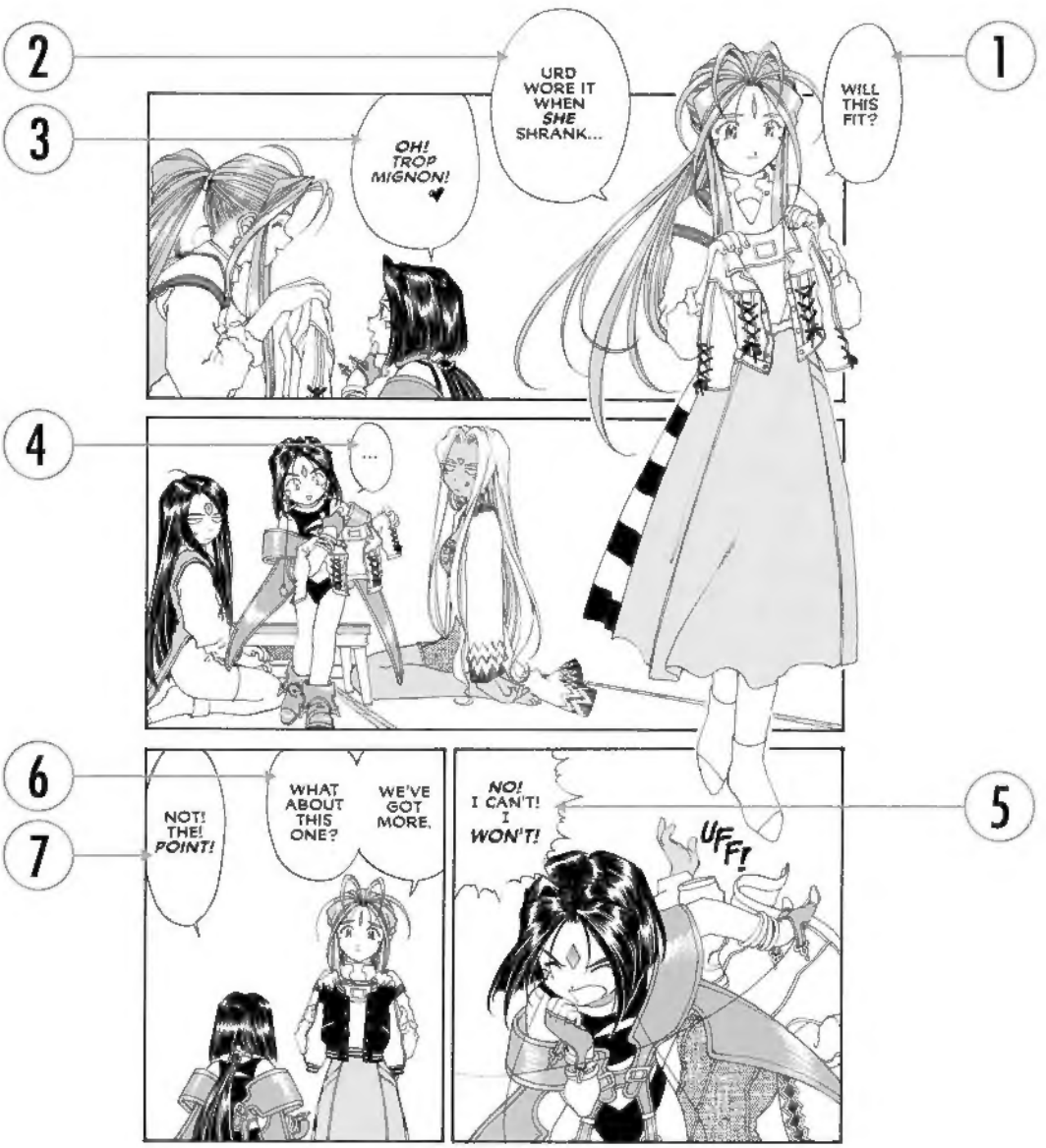
Creator Kosuke Fujishima in 1989!

His message to fans in the original Japanese *Oh My Goddess!* Vol. 1:

"I've been so busy working on the manga that I haven't even had the chance to go outside; in fact, just now I found myself realizing that I literally hadn't so much as set foot out the door in the past three days. And it looks like I'm not going to get away anywhere this summer, either. So, remember the only leisure I'll get is from your fan mail."

STOP! This is the back of the book!

This manga collection is translated into English, but arranged in right-to-left reading format to maintain the artwork's visual orientation as originally drawn and published in Japan. If you've never read comics this way before, take a look at the diagram below to give yourself an idea of how to go about it. Basically, you'll be starting in the upper right-hand corner, and will read each word balloon and panel moving right-to-left. It may take a little getting used to, but you should get the hang of it very quickly. Have fun! If this is the millionth manga you've read this way, never mind.



MANGA/HUMOR

Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ 1

HERE'S WHERE IT ALL BEGINS!

Alone in his dorm on a Saturday night, Nekomi Tech's Keiichi Morisato dials a wrong number that will change his life forever—reaching the Goddess Technical Help Line. Granted one wish by the charming young goddess Belldandy—a wish for anything in the world—Keiichi wishes she would stay with him always! How is his mysterious new "exchange student" companion going to be received on the N.I.T. campus? A little too well for normal life to ever return...

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